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THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

MAY

1922



Joseph Hergesheimer

whose recently published novel "Cytherea" is being discussed from a dozen different points of view all over America, has written for this magazine the most richly coloured and romantic novel of his career. By the magic of his pen he transports you into the heart of Cuba, where you meet La Clavele, the great dancer, and pass through innumerable adventures with her and the men who kneel at her feet. The story bears the alluring title

"The Bright Shawl"

and it begins in the next—the June—Red Book Magazine, with superb illustrations by Everett Shinn.

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Painted from life

Haskell Coffin

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BOYS, GIRLS AND BOBCATS

By HENRY WELLINGTON WACK, F. R. G. S.

Founder and First Editor of "Field and Stream"

If you have a He-Boy, let him change his company every summer from the drawing-room to the wilderness. He will come back to you a boy and a half. You will have put a window into his soul.

If you have a timid boy, drive him into the woods. He will come back, when the russet leaves begin to chatter, a lad of courage and bigger powers.

Girls—God bless them! They often come into the balsam glades as fragile and helpless as a candy cane, and go out on the Autumn tide like Diana of the Hills—as brawned and brown as summer colts.

Manhood and Womanhood made in the forests of this glorious land, in its mountains, on its brooks and rivers, in its great silences, is a form of human character which cities cannot yield.

The finest Summer Camps in the world exist in the United States. The educational system of the country has evolved them. They are the new lungs, the stout legs, the self-reliance, the healthy hike of the school-in-extension and the home-in-the-wilds.

Summer Camps are great character, muscle and courage builders. They make a boy or a girl handy of hand and hardy of heart. They teach them order, cleanliness and a daily purpose. They keep their heads and their feet busy—the best tonic for young and old—and they keep them "going, going on" in a constructive, onward way that, in some camps, has become a science. These camps have a very effective system of selective balances whereby the boy who, by sound precept and example, shows a superlative degree of the manly virtues, rises into

leadership, gains the esteem of his camp mates, the respect and appreciation of his seniors and teachers. He returns to the winter classroom with extended influence and power. Having learned to obey, he can now command. He is the good big brother to the bad little fellows; or he is the game little fellow whose sportsmanship the big boys and the little boys all admire.

A Summer Camp, properly equipped and directed, is the most effective of all schools. Its freedom, its naturalness, its *esprit de corps*, the sun and rain and wind and calm; the big bass or the scrappy trout; the bobcat and the coon; the canoe spills and glorious swims, the useful camp work and discipline; the religion of nature close to Nature's heart—all these appeal to boys and girls with heads, hearts and real glad hands, where they can use them with the freedom of the deer, the sagacity of the hound, the joy of the birds aloft.

Don't belittle the vital importance of sending your youngsters to a good camp, in a salubrious region, where the water and drainage are of the best, and the physical, mental and moral equipment of the highest. That will be a contribution to present and future generations—to our national life.

After all, "the Hills were God's first Temples." If we people the hills with the youth of the land, there will be no Abyss. Boys and Girls never forget the sunshine of their lives.

Henry Wellington Wack



THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE'S SCHOOL SECTION

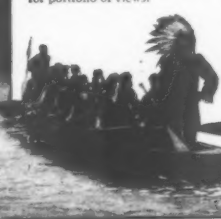


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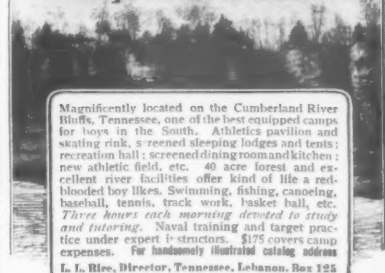
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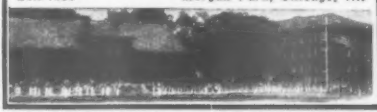
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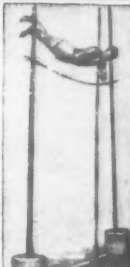
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"I REDUCED from 175 pounds to 153 pounds in 2 weeks! (22 pounds lost in 14 days). If you had known me before and could see me now, you would realize what a wonderful discovery your new method is. Before I started I was flabby, heavy and sick—had stomach trouble all the time. Had no vigor. I feel wonderful now." Name furnished on request.

This person's experience is duplicated by that of hundreds of others who have quickly regained their normal, healthful weight, and strong, graceful and slender figures in the simplest, easiest and most delightful way known. Mrs. George Guiterman of 420 East 66th Street, New York, lost 13 pounds in the very first 8 days. Mrs. Mary Denny of 82 West 9th Street, Bayonne, N. J., lost 74 pounds in record time, reduced her bust 7½ inches, her waist 9 inches and her hips 11 inches. She also banished her pimples and secured a beautiful complexion; all through this marvelous new method. She can now RUN upstairs without puffing or discomfort, whereas before it made her feel faint just to walk up.

Look Years Younger When Fat Departs

A Pennsylvania woman writes "Since I lost those 54 pounds I feel 20 years younger—and my family say I look it."

This appearance of youth is one of the most delightful results of this new method. Fat people always look older than they really are. Merely to secure a slender form would bring a more youthful appearance. But this new method also results in a clearer skin, a brighter eye, a firmer step and the most wonderful energy and vitality. Many write us that they have been positively amazed to lose lines and wrinkles which they had supposed to be ineffaceable. So that when you reduce to normal weight in this new simple fascinating, natural way, you look even younger than most slender

NO Exercise, Starving, Special Baths, Rolling, Massage, Appliances, Special Clothing or any Discomfort Whatever.

Results in 48 Hours

people of the same age. You can then dress stylishly and yet be in perfect taste. This season's designs are made for thin people. In a very short time after using this marvelous new method, you can wear the most colorful, the most fluffy, and the most extreme styles; and look well in them.

And best of all, these wonderful benefits are secured without any discomforts whatever. No starving, no exercise, no medicines—nothing to do but pay attention to an easily followed law of nature. In reward, nature gives everything and exacts no payment.

The Secret Explained

As simple and easily understood as is this natural law it seems almost magical in its results. Eugene Christian, a specialist of international renown, discovered that it is not *how much* they eat, and to a certain extent it is not even *what* they eat that causes people with natural fatty tendencies to put on surplus flesh. It is how their food is combined. Eat certain dishes at the same meal and they will cause more flabbiness and fat and fill the body with the poisons that cause the puffiness, the lack-lustre eyes and the skin blemishes which so often accompany obesity. But eat these very same dishes at different times and properly combined with other ordinary foods and they make muscle and bone and good rich blood instead of fat. Then the fat you have already stored up is rapidly consumed. This discovery is the greatest boon ever given to stout people who have found dieting a weakener, exercises a task and drugs a delusion. For when you learn the secret of properly combining your food you can eat Potatoes, Fowl, Meat, Fish, Milk, Butter, Cheese, Chocolate, Corn Bread, Wheat Bread, and many other dishes you have probably been denying yourself. And yet you will lose weight steadily, right from the start—perhaps a pound a day, perhaps more, as so many others have done.

And as the unhealthy fat departs, your flesh

becomes firm, your complexion clears, your eyes brighten and your health and energy increase wonderfully. Youthful looks, youthful spirits and a youthful form become quickly yours.

When you have reduced to normal weight and your fatty tendencies have been corrected it will not be necessary for you to pay further attention to how your food is combined. Still you will probably want to keep these combinations up all your life, for as Mr. Clyde Tapp, of Poole, Ky., says: "The delicious menus make every meal a pleasure never experienced before."

Free Trial—Send No Money

Send no money now—just fill out and mail coupon or send letter if you prefer. We will send you in 12 interesting booklets, complete instructions and dozens of delicious menus containing the foods you like combined in a way to enable you to quickly attain a slenderness which makes you look well in the most colorful, fluffy or bouffant styles. Weigh yourself when the course arrives. Follow the appetizing menus in the first lesson. Weigh yourself again in a couple of days and note the delightful and astonishing result.

People have been so grateful for what Christian has done for them that they have voluntarily paid him fees of \$500.00 to \$1,000.00. But he wants everyone to be able to own this course on "Weight Control." So in addition to a FREE TRIAL offer, he makes the following nominal price, which you will probably consider as hardly paying for printing and handling. You pay the postman only \$1.97 (plus postage) when the course arrives. And it is then yours. There are no further charges. If you are dissatisfied with it you will have the privilege of returning it within 5 days and your money will then be instantly refunded. So you risk nothing. Act today! You'll soon create astonishment and envy among your friends by your renewed slenderness, increased health and youthful appearance. CORRECTIVE EATING SOCIETY, INC., Dept. W-1205, 43 W. 16th St., New York City.

If you prefer to write a letter copy wording of coupon in a letter or on a postcard.

CORRECTIVE EATING SOCIETY, INC.
Dept. W-1205, 43 W. 16th St., New York City

You may send me, IN PLAIN WRAPPER, Eugene Christian's Course "Weight Control—the Basis of Health," in 12 books. I will pay the postman \$1.97 (Plus Postage) on arrival. But if I am not satisfied with it I have the privilege of returning the course and my money will be instantly refunded.

Name..... Please Write Plainly
Street.....
City..... State.....
Price outside U. S. \$2.15 Cash with Order.

The Prudential in 1921

Paid-for business (issued, revived and increased) . . . **\$1,139,784,232**

Over \$107,000,000 greater than in 1920, The Prudential's best previous year—an achievement testifying to the constantly increasing confidence of the public in The Prudential.

Total insurance in force **\$5,668,080,870**

Including an increase of over \$572,000,000 made during 1921.

Number of policies in force **22,143,233**

Representing insurance on one out of every eight persons in the United States and Canada.

Number of death claims paid since organization **3,191,139**

Including 175,623 claims paid in 1921, at the rate of 585 for each business day.

Paid policyholders in 1921 **\$68,970,512**

Total paid policyholders since organization, plus amount held for their security, now exceeds \$1,538,342,000.

Dividends paid policyholders in 1921 **\$16,537,822**

Since mutualization became effective in 1916, policyholders whose contracts contained no provision for dividends have received \$27,000,000 in dividends, which would not have been paid under the Company's previous practice.

Reserves, held to protect policy contracts . **\$717,824,358**

Held for policy dividends, payable

after 1921 **20,752,077**

Other liabilities **17,680,126**

Surplus, including capital stock **33,251,662**

Assets **\$789,508,223**

The savings of Prudential policyholders, securely held and busily working in loans upon homes, farms, schools, railroads and other industries, as well as in municipal, state and government securities.

ALL FORMS OF LIFE INSURANCE ISSUED

**The Prudential Insurance Co.
of America**

Incorporated under the laws of the State of New Jersey

Forrest F. Dryden, President

Home Office, Newark, N. J.





CONSTANCE BINNEY
Film and Stage Star
Photo by Edward Thayer Monroe, New York



MARTHA MANSFIELD
Film Star formerly of "The Follies"
Photo by C. Smith Gardner, New York



ALMA RUBENS
Film Star
Photo by Campbell Studios, New York



ELAINE HAMMERSTEIN

Film Star

Photo by Edward Thayer Monroe, New York



EVAN BURROWS FONTAINE

Dancer

Photo by Alfred Cheney Johnston, New York



ANNETTE BADE
in "Midnight Frolic"

Photo by Edward Thayer Monroe, New York



THE MIRACLE OF THE FEMININE

By THOMAS L. MASSON

Editor of LIFE

Decoration by W. T. BENDA

All over this country American women are getting up to their necks in business. A movement that timidly began two decades or so ago with assistant bookkeepers, cashiers and stenographers, now continues in full force with lady corporation heads, platform orators, lawyers, sales agents, brokers, politicians and magnates. And the most remarkable part of this great movement is that the thing so many feared has not happened. In the old days, when a woman stepped out of the beaten feminine

path and tried to do what men did, she was hailed as a freak, and was termed masculine. And that may have been true in an age where only occasional masculine women dared to act. But a great miracle has been taking place before our eyes, and it has come so slowly that we have not realized how much of a miracle it is.

¶ For it now appears to us that the most feminine women are engaged in enterprises that have hitherto been deemed the most masculine, and this without

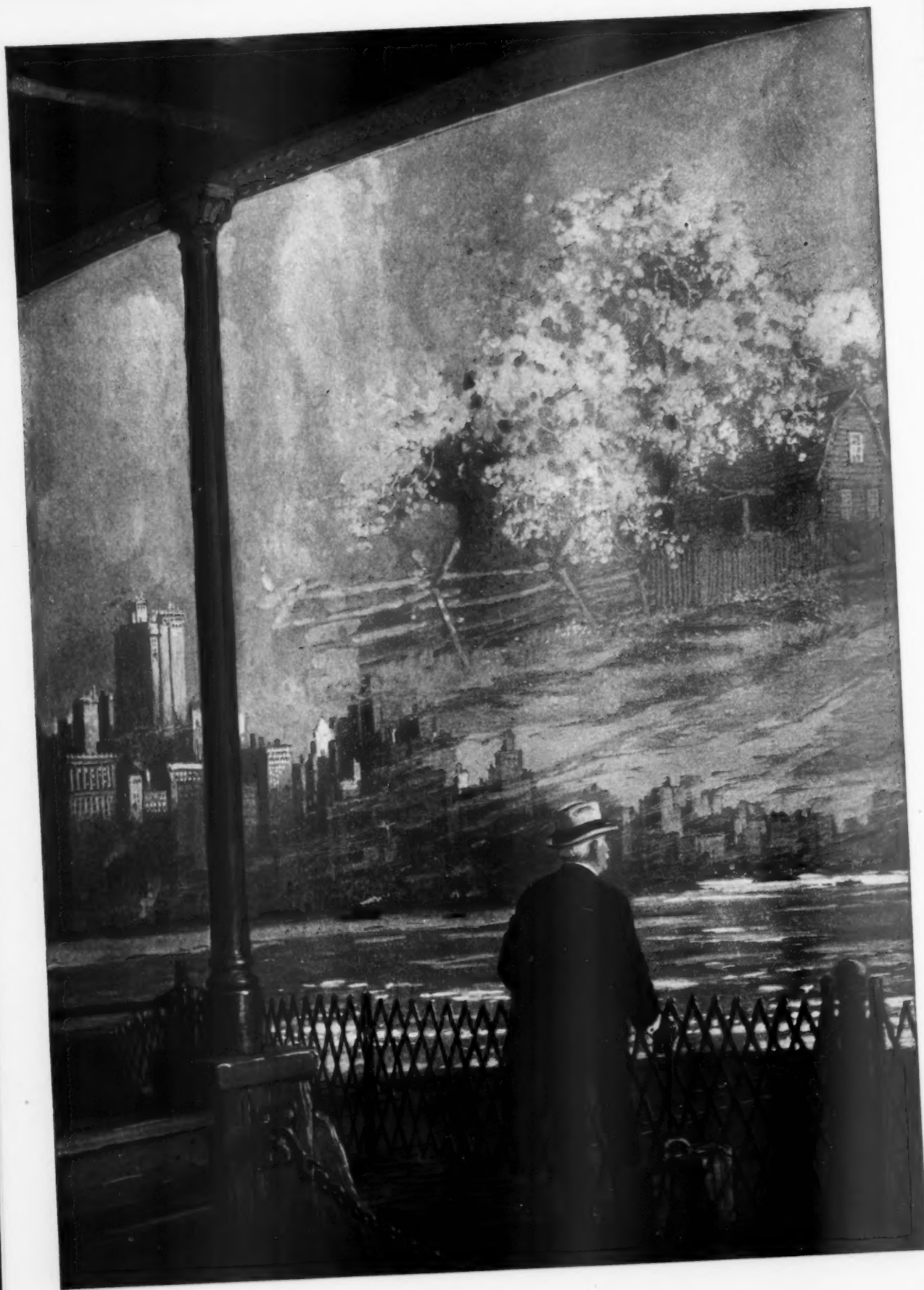


losing their femininity. In many cases, indeed, they seem to have added to it. We now see that a woman may develop herself mentally, until she is capable of managing a large enterprise, while at the same time she continues to be a delightful woman. While taking on the substance of the sturdy oak, she may still remain the clinging vine. It is possible to love and be loved by a lady judge, to hold her head (bobbed or otherwise) on one's shoulder, without any diminution of sentiment or respect. And what an atmosphere of romance is already accumulating around lady mayors and heads of police departments!

¶ It is to the unaided instincts of women themselves that we are indebted for this miracle. At first the pioneers of the great feminine movement faltered. They thought that in order to acquire

executive ability or other powers in the field hitherto occupied by man, they would have to brush their hair straight back from their foreheads and make themselves as angular and unattractive as possible. But they soon learned better. History, unfortunately, has made no record of the first great business female executive who discovered that she could look sweet while bossing the office force all over the place—indeed, that the fact that she did look sweet gave her added power.

¶ Thus today there is no woman in America, no matter how large her salary may be or how many gigantic enterprises she may be fathering, who, if one asked her a certain question, might not blush and stammer with downcast eyes, while murmuring: "This is so sudden!"





THE HOME-TRAIL IN MAY

By TOM A. DALY

Decoration by ANGUS MACDONALL

With the level sunlight tangled in his homeward-leaping feet,
There is one will leave his labor like a boy,
And the trolley-car that gulps him at the corner of the street
Will become a gleaming chariot of joy.

And there's one will speed away
To the river or the bay,
Where the grimy, clumsy ferryboat, a golden galley now,
Through the spicy isles of fairyland an opal path will plow—
For the driver of the trolley and the pilot in the prow
Is the apple-blossom spirit of the May.

For the master and the menial her witchery is spun,
And a million hearts are kindled at her flame;
Down a million roads she leads them, at the setting of the sun,
Though the goal that each shall win to is the same.

For the star that lights the way
From the cares that fret the day,
Over tawdry city thoroughfares or wash of harbor foam,
Till the journey's happy ending brings the tired toiler home,
"To the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was
Rome,"

Is the apple-blossom spirit of the May.

Oh, the dingiest of doorways now a gate of Eden seems,
And the humblest heart hangs blossoms on the bough,
For the time is come, if ever, for renewal of our dreams
Of the Used-to-be, the Yet-to-be, or Now.

There are joys that leap away
To a coming bridal day;
There are memories that linger on a dream that's dead and
done;

But of all the season's dearest are the holy dreams that run
Through the wedded hearts, still steadfast, and still quick
to be at one

With the apple-blossom spirit of the May.

"DEPENDABILITY PLUS"

In an unpretentious office in one of the greatest manufacturing plants in the world, there sits a quiet, elderly man who is known to every one, from the president to the smallest office boy, as "Dependability Plus."

For forty years he has been in the employ of this company. There is not a question concerning the business that he cannot answer better than any one else. He is responsible for more than half the improvements in their product; he tests and approves every change in their methods. His achievements have won him world-wide fame.

Yet, if you ask him, he will tell you that his greatest pride is in the affectionate, respectful name by which he is known to all, "Dependability Plus."

For every man who is voluntarily dependable, there are a hundred dependable only through force of circumstance. Placed in positions where dependability is a requirement, it becomes with them a forced virtue—a feeble flame that needs the constant fanning of necessity.

Voluntary dependability is a quality of the spirit. It may characterize a business as well as a man or woman. When it does you will find the name of that business honored and respected wherever it is heard. And you will find its products of a quality that is rarely equaled.

In the manufacture of pharmaceutical and chemical products Squibb holds such a place. Squibb quality in the products described below is a revelation to persons who use them for the first time.

Squibb's castor oil, for example, is not the offensive, unpleasant cathartic that is taken under protest by so many people. By careful refining and purifying, the Squibb product is almost entirely freed from the detested taste and is of greater medicinal value as well.

This same thing holds true with other Squibb HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS. At the Squibb Laboratories, for more than half a century, a constant process of testing and research work has raised the purity and efficacy of all Squibb products to a point that never has been reached before.

There is no reason why you should be satisfied with quality that is inferior to Squibb. But there are a score of reasons why you should prefer Squibb quality above any other.

Squibb's Cod Liver Oil—selected finest Norwegian; cold pressed; pure in taste. Rich in vitamins.

Squibb's Castor Oil—specially refined, bland in taste; dependable.

Squibb's Epsom Salt—free from impurities. Preferred also for taste.

Squibb's Stearate of Zinc—a soft and protective powder of highest purity.

Squibb's Sugar of Milk—specially refined for preparing infants' food. Quickly soluble. In sealed tins.

Squibb's Olive Oil—selected oil from Southern France. Absolutely pure. (Sold only through druggists.)

Squibb's Pure Spices—specially selected by laboratory tests for their full strength and flavor. (Sold only through druggists.)

Squibb's Magnesia Dental Cream—made from Squibb's Milk of Magnesia. Contains no soap or other detrimental substance. Corrects mouth acidity.

Squibb's Talcum Powder—a delightfully soft and soothing powder. Boudoir, Carnation, Violet and Unscented.

Squibb's Cold Cream—an exquisite preparation of correct composition for the care of the skin.

Squibb's Bicarbonate of Soda—exceedingly pure, therefore without bitter taste.

Squibb's Sodium Phosphate—a specially purified product, free from arsenic, therefore safe.

Squibb's Boric Acid—pure and perfectly soluble. Soft powder for dusting; granular form for solutions.



Sold by reliable druggists everywhere, in original sealed packages.
"The Priceless Ingredient" of every product is the honor and integrity of its maker.

SQUIBB

General Offices: 80 Beckman Street, New York City



Laboratories: Brooklyn, N. Y.; New Brunswick, N. J.

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On Being Too Careful

A Common-Sense Editorial by BRUCE BARTON

They told me the other day that a big, full-blooded friend of ours had broken down at the age of forty-three and was in a sanitarium.

This is not a remarkable bit of news unless you know the circumstances.

The big fellow was one of the famous oarsmen of his time on the crew of an Eastern university. His father's income was sufficient so that our friend has never worked. He has been a traveler, a fisherman, a big-game hunter. His first and almost his only real concern has been to take care of his physical well being.

And he goes to smash at forty-three.

The father, on the contrary, works every day as the president of an important business in a highly competitive field. He is still hitting on all six cylinders at the youthful age of eighty-one.

There is something to think about.

Lord Leverhulme, the great English manufacturer, in a recent letter to a friend, quoted this story of Gladstone.

"During the early coaching days, Gladstone used to inquire from the coaches that went out of London through Barnet and St. Albans, whether it was not hard on the horses, and whether the alternative road, which goes through Slough and is fairly level, was not better.

"And he was surprised to find that the horses on the Highgate road lasted half again as long as the horses on the level Slough road. From which he drew the inference that it was variety and change, collar-work at one point and no collar-work at another, that was best for the health of a horse, and in his experience, best for the health of a man."

Gladstone himself was that sort of worker. He knew how to take relaxation and exercise, but he made no effort to spare himself when it came to work. He carried a tremendous load all his life and was sufficiently youthful in old age so that he took up the study of a new language a year or two before the end.

I have no quarrel with the folks who "look after themselves," as the saying goes, who are always cautious not to overwork or be overtired. They doubtless live quite comfortably, but I think they deceive themselves if they imagine that they are going to outlive those who work hard and long.

The man who throws his whole self into his job seems somehow to draw new strength and energy from its uphill and downdale exactions.

And frequently he outlives the chap whose principal care is to be careful.



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Whenever soap comes in contact with the skin—use Ivory.

Ivory Soap comes in a convenient size and form for every purpose



Small Cake

For toilet, bath, nursery, shampoo, fine laundry. Can be divided in two for individual toilet use.



Large Cake

Especially for laundry use. Also preferred by many for the bath.



Ivory Soap Flakes

Especially for the washbowl washing of delicate garments. Sample package free on request to Division 28-E, Dept. of Home Economics, The Procter & Gamble Co., Cincinnati, Ohio.

THINK of all the little babies who coo with delight every morning in their bath because Ivory Soap feels so grateful to their delicate skin.

Think of all the people who owe their clear, fine-textured complexions and soft, lustrous hair to their habit of using Ivory Soap for toilet, daily bath and shampoo.

Think of all the housekeepers whose hands are white and comely because they use Ivory Soap for washing dishes and for cleaning.

Think how much of the clothing in almost every family is laundered safely and inexpensively with Ivory Soap.

Then you will realize how fortunate it is that there is at least one soap that has every one of the seven qualities necessary for complete efficiency, safety and satisfaction in any and all uses. Abundant lather, quick rinsing, purity, mildness, whiteness, fragrance and "it floats"—these seven essentials combine to make Ivory the ideal soap.

IVORY SOAP  **99 $\frac{44}{100}$ % PURE**

IT FLOATS



THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

MAY 1922. VOL. XXXIX, NUMBER 1

KARL EDWIN HARRIMAN, Editor

Contraband

By CLARENCE BUDINGTON KELLAND

Illustrated by William Meade Prince

In this captivating novel by the author of "The Little Moment of Happiness" and "Conflict" is told the remarkable story of Carmel Lee, a daughter of today



TUBAL gave the key another quarter turn in the quoin and tested the security of the type in the form with the heel of his grimy hand. After that he shut his eyes very tight and ran his tongue carefully over his upper teeth and clucked. Then, in the voice of one who pronounces a new and wonderful thought, he spoke.

"Simmy," he said, "I dunno. Mebby so—mebby not. There's p'int in favor and p'int against."

"I," said Simmy with the cock-sureness of his seventeen years, "am goin' to git through. Don't ketch me workin' for no woman."

"She's one of them college women we've been readin' about."

"Makes it wuss. Women," said Simmy, who had given deep thought to such matters and reached profound conclusions, "haint got no business gittin' all eddicated up. What they ought to study is cookbooks. That's what I say."

"Calc'late she'll be gifted with big words."

"She'll wear them kind of glasses," said Simmy, "that'll make you think you're lookin' into the show-winders of the Busy Big Store if you come onto her face to face."

"Simmy, I'll tell you suthin: I'll be fifty year old, come September, and I haint never married one of 'em yit."

"I haint never goin' to marry one, neither."

"Shake!" said Tubal.

There ensued a silence while Tubal completed the locking of the form and secured it on the job-press.

"Well," said Tubal for the hundredth time, "ol' man Nupley's dead and gone."

"Seems like he might 'a' left this here paper to you an' me that's worked and slaved fer him, instid of to this female nephew of his'n."

"Niece," corrected Tubal. "No, ol' man Nupley wa'n't fond of me, but he didn't owe me no grudge to warrant him wishin' this thing onto me. Say, we got out two issues since he passed, anyway, haint we? You an' me—alone and unaided!" Tubal mopped his brow at recollection of the mental anguish suffered in achieving this feat.

"They was dum good issues," Simmy said pridefully.

Tubal was not without his pride in the accomplishment, a pride tinged with doubt which had been made acute that very morning when he stopped at the post office for the mail. Certain of the village's professional humorists had greeted him with enthusiasm, and quoted from his works with relish. Tubal had been very much put to it for copy to fill the paper, and had seized upon every incident, great or small, as worthy of mention, and had not used one word where there was a possibility of enlisting two. For instance, after hearing it quoted, he felt there was some defect in the style of the personal which stated:

"Our fellow-townsmen Herbert Whitcomb has painted his large and spacious and comfortable residence on Pine Street near the corner with a coat of white paint. Herb did the job himself, working evenings, but not Sundays, he being a Methodist and

superintendent of the Sunday School. Many assembled to watch our selectman and tyler of the Masonic lodge (Herb) working at the job of painting his residence, and thus, besides showing public spirit in improving the general appearance of our village, gave many something to do, there being no other amusement in town. Good for you, Herb. That is the spirit we like."

He had rather fancied the item about Jim Bagby—considered he had filled the maximum space with a minute piece of news.

"Jim Bagby our prominent farmer and Democrat from north of town has been dynamiting out the stumps out of the pasture lot that he has used to pasture cattle. Jim used for the purpose the best and most powerful brand of dynamite he could get and the numerous explosions of the dynamite, each blast removing a stump out of the pasture, could be heard the length and breadth of the village. Dynamite, says Jim, is the thing to make the wilderness blossom like a rose. Another year we hope to see the pasture out of which Jim dynamited the stumps covered with the verdure of potatoes or other garden truck."

Tubal recalled the mental anguish which went into the composition of these and columns of other similar items, and solemnly renounced forever the dignities of editorship.

"No," he said, wagging his head gravely, "I calc'late ol' man Nupley done us a favor by leavin' this sheet to somebody else."

"She'll be comin' on the noon train," said Simmy. "That's when I quit."

"I s'pose," Tubal said as he cocked his eye at a cockroach scurrying across the floor, "she'll favor ol' man Nupley in looks. Seems like that's a cross heavier'n any woman ought to bear." He estimated the rate of progress of the roach, and as it were, brought down his bird with a supremely skillfully aimed jet of the juice of the weed. "If women is goin' to insist on keepin' on bein' women, they ought to see to it you can look at 'em without sufferin'."

"Mebby she's jest comin' to sell out," said Simmy hopefully.

"Sell? Sell this here rag! Say!"

"Why not, I'd like to know?"

"Because," said Tubal, "it owes about two hundred dollars more'n it's wuth. And now we lost the county advertisin', it'll owe a dum sight more."

He walked to the door which gave from the front of the shop to the business and editorial office of the paper, and there he stood as if upon some vantage point surveying all that existed of the *Gibeon Free Press*. What he saw was not especially inviting; nowhere was an indication of that romance which is believed to lurk about the business of disseminating news. The shop wore the haphazard look of a junk-yard, contented to recline and snore in dust and frowsiness. The room wore the air of a place where nothing has ever happened and where nothing is likely ever to happen.

Just inside the door squatted the antiquated, limping cylinder-press which gave birth weekly to the *Free Press*, and which gave off with sullen brazenness the look of overmuch childbearing. It knew it was going to break down in the middle of every run, and it had been cursed at so often and so fluently that it was utterly indifferent. It was a press without ambition. Of late years it had gotten into a frame of mind where it didn't care a hang whether it printed a paper or not—which is an alarming state of mind for a printing-press to be in. Over to the right were shelves of stock, ill-assorted, dusty, dog-eared at the corners where Tubal had rubbed his shoulder against them in passing. Thin stacks of red and blue board, upon which tickets for the Methodist Lawn Sociable or the Baptist Chicken Dinner might

be printed, lopped with discouraged limpness over the edge of the shelving and said improper and insulting things to the slatternly press. A couple of stones elbowed each other; and a case of type a little farther back, and a comparatively new (and unpaid-for) job-press, rather stuck up its nose at the rest of the company and felt itself altogether too good for such society. There was also a theoretical spittoon—theoretical because it was the one spot in the room safe from Tubal's unerring jets of tobacco-juice. These were the high-spots arising from a jumble of rubbish which it was easier to kick about from place to place than to remove altogether. Tubal wagged his head.



He turned to survey the business and editorial office, and found nothing there to uplift his soul. There was a grimy railing of matched lumber, inside which a table staggered under an accumulation of exchanges and catalogues and old cuts brought in to pass the evening of their lives as paper-weights. An old black walnut desk with a bookcase in its second story tried to maintain a faded dignity beside an old safe from which the combination knob had been removed for fear somebody would shut and lock it, as once happened, with disastrous results. On the wall hung a group picture of the State legislature of 1882. One could have bedded down a cow very comfortably in the waste paper on the floor.

"Simmy," said Tubal solemnly, "she's a hell of a messy place."



In his astonishment Tubal pointed a lean, inky finger at the tip of her nose. "You! You!" he said.

Seems like we ought to kind of tidy up some for the new proprietor—or suthin'. No use, though. Haint no place to begin. Only thing wuth cleanin' up is the chattel mortgage Abner Fownes holds over the place." He turned and scowled at Simmy, and smote his hands together. "By jing," he said, "the's one thing we kin do—we kin wash your face! That'll show."

Simmy responded by jerking his thumb toward the front door, before which two men had paused, one a diminutive hunchback, the other an enormous, fleshy individual with a beard of the sort worn, not for adornment, but as the result of indolence which regards shaving as a labor not to be endured. The pair talked with manifest excitement for a moment before they entered.

"Mornin'," said Tubal.

"Mornin'," said the corpulent one. The hunchback squinted and showed his long and very white teeth, but did not respond verbally to the greeting.

"Say," said the big man, "seen the Sheriff?"

"Why?" replied Tubal.

"Cause," said Deputy Jenney, "if you haint, nobody has."

"Since last night about nine o'clock," said the hunchback in the unpleasant, high-pitched voice not uncommon to those crippled as he was.

"He got up off'm the front porch last night around nine o'clock and says to his wife he was goin' out to pump him a pail of fresh water. Didn't put on a hat nor nuthin'. That's the last anybody's seen of him. Yes sir! Jest stepped into the house and out of the back door—"

"Mebby he fell down the well," said Tubal helpfully.

"His wife's terrible upset. I been searchin' for him since daybreak, but not a hide or hair kin I find—nor a soul that seen him. He might of went up in a balloon right out of his back yard for all the trace he's left."

"What d'ye mistrust?" asked Tubal.

"You haint seen him?"

"No."

"Well, say, don't make no hullabaloo about it in the paper—yit. Mebby everything's all right."

The hunchback laughed, not a long, hearty laugh of many haw-haw-haw's after the fashion of male Gibeon, but one short nasal sound that was almost a squawk.

"Might be," said Simmy, "he sneaked off to lay for one of them rum-runners."

"What rum-runners?" said the hunchback, snapping out the words viciously, and fixing his gimlet eyes on the boy with an unblinking stare.

"The ones," said Simmy with perfect logic, "that's doin' the rum-runnin'."

"Hum! Jest dropped in to ask if you'd seen him—and to kind of warn you not to go printin' nothin' premature-like. We'll be gittin' along, Peewee and me. . . . Seems mighty funny a man'd up and disappear like that, especial the Sheriff, without leavin' no word with me." Deputy Jenney allowed his bulk to surge toward the door, and Peewee Bangs followed at his heels—a good-natured, dull-witted mastiff and an off-breed, heel-snapping terrier mongrel.

"Well," said Tubal, "that's that! I haint mislaid no pet sheriff."

"Mebby," said Simmy with bated breath, "them miscreants has waylaid him and masacred him."

"Shucks! Say, you been readin' them dime-novel, Jesse James stories ag'in. Go wash your face."

In the distance, echoing from hill to hill and careening down the valley, sounded the whistle of a locomotive.

"On time," said Tubal.

"And her comin' on it!" said Simmy.

From that moment neither of them spoke for a long time. They remained in a sort of state of suspended animation, listening for the arrival of the train, awaiting the arrival of the new proprietor of the Gibeon *Free Press*. Ten minutes later the bus stopped before the door, and a young woman alighted. Two pairs of eyes inside the printing office stared at her, and then turned to meet. "Taint her," said Tubal.

Tubal based his statement upon a preconception with which the young lady did not at all agree. She was small and very slender. Tubal guessed she was eighteen, when as a matter of fact she was twenty-two. There was about her an air of class, of breeding, such as Tubal had noted in certain summer visitors in Gibeon. From head to feet she was dressed in white—a tiny white hat upon her chestnut hair, a white jacket, a white skirt, not too short, but of suitable length for an active young woman, and white buckskin shoes. All these points Tubal might have admitted in the new owner of the *Free Press*, but when he scrutinized her face, he *knew*. No relative of old man Nupley could look like that! She was lovely,—no less,—with the dazzling, bewitching loveliness of intelligent youth. She was something more than lovely; she was individual. There was a certain pertness about her nose and chin; humor lurked in the corners of her eyes. She would think and say interesting things, and it would be very difficult to frighten her. Tubal wagged his head, woman-hater that he was, and admitted inwardly that there were points in her favor.

And then—and then she advanced toward the door and opened it.

"This is the office of the *Free Press*, is it not?" she said.

"Yes'm. What kin we do for you?"

"I'm not sure. A great deal, I hope. I am Carmel Lee—the new editor of this paper."

In his astonishment Tubal pointed a lean, inky finger at the tip of her nose, and poked it at her twice before he could speak. "You! You!" he said, and then swallowed hard, and felt as if he were unpleasantly suspended between heaven and earth with nothing to do or say.

"I," she answered.

Tubal swung his head slowly and glared at Simmy, evidently laying the blame for this situation upon the boy's shoulders.

"Git out of here!" he whispered hoarsely. "And for Gawd's sake—*wash your face.*"

Simmy vanished; and Tubal, praying for succor, remained, nonplused, speechless.

"Is that my desk?" asked Miss Lee. "Um!" Then she won Tubal's undying devotion at a single stroke. "I presume," she said, "you are foreman of the composing-room."

He nodded dumbly.

"You—you look very nice and efficient. I'm glad I'm going to have a man like you to help me. Is it *very* hard to run a real newspaper?"

"It's easy. You haint got any idea how easy it is. Why, Simmy and me, we done it for two issues, and 'twan't no chore to speak of. Where's that Simmy? Hey, Simmy!"

"He went," said Miss Lee, "to wash his face. Now I think I shall go to the hotel. It's next door, isn't it? After I have lunch, I'll come back, and we'll go to work. You'll—have to take me in hand, wont you? Is this a—*a profitable paper?*"

"By gosh, it will be. We'll make her the doggonedest paper in the State. We'll—"

"Thank *you*," said Miss Lee. "Right after lunch we'll start in." And with that she walked daintily out of the office and turned toward the Commercial House. Tubal gave a great sigh, and leaned on the office railing.

"*Has she gone?*" came a whisper from the shop.

"You come here. Git in here where I kin talk to you."

"Here I be. Say, when do we quit?"

"Quit? Quit what?"

"Our jobs. We was goin' to. You an' me wont work for no woman?"

"Who said so? Who said anythin' about quittin', I'd like to know? Not me! And say, if I ketch you tryin' to quit, I'll skin you alive. You an' me, we got to stick by that leetle gal, we have. Foreman of the composin' room! By jing! Perty as a picture!"

"Say, you gone crazy, or what?"

"She's a-comin' back right after lunch. Git to work, you! Git this office cleaned up and swept up and dusted up. Think she can work amongst this litter? Git a mop and a pail. We'll fix up this hole so's she can eat off'm the floor if she takes a notion. Simmy, she's goin' to stay and run this paper. That leetle gal's goin' to be our boss. Goshamighty!"



"I wish," said the young man, "to address

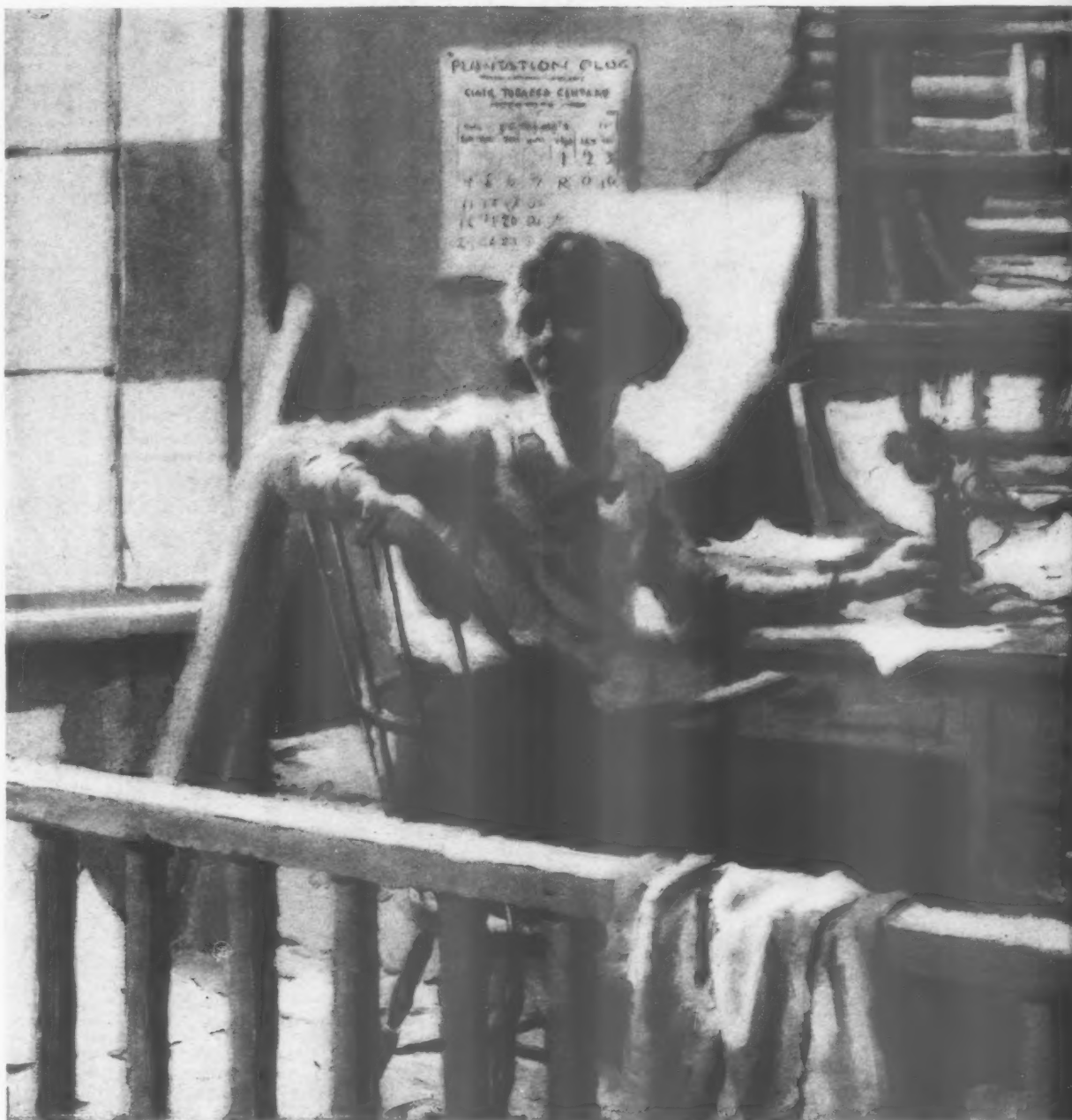
Chapter Two

CARMEL LEE had been told by everybody, ever since she could remember being told anything, that she was headstrong and impulsive. Her parents had impressed it upon her, and rather proudly had disseminated the fact among the neighbors until it became a tradition in the little Michigan town where she was born. People held the idea that one must make allowances for Carmel and be perpetually ready to look with tolerance on outbursts of impulse. Her teachers had accepted the tradition and were accustomed to advise with her upon the point. The reputation accompanied her to the university, and only a few weeks before, upon her graduation, the head of the department of rhetoric (which included a course in journalism) spent an entire valuable hour beseeching her to curb her willfulness and to count as high as fifty before she reached a decision.

So Carmel, after being the victim of such propaganda for sixteen or seventeen years, could not be censured if she believed it herself. She had gotten to be rather afraid of Carmel and of what Carmel might do unexpectedly. Circumspection and repression had become her watchwords, and the present business of her

life was to look before she leaped. She had made a vow of deliberation. As soon as she found herself wanting to do something, she became suspicious of it. Whenever she became aware of a desire to act, she compelled herself to sit down and think it over. Not that this did a great deal of good, but it gave her a very pleasing sensation of self-mastery! As a matter of fact, she was not at all introspective. She had taken the word of bystanders for her impulsiveness; it was no discovery of her own. And now that she was schooling herself in repression, she did not perceive in the least that she failed to repress. When she wanted to do a thing, she usually did it. The deliberation only postponed the event. When she forced herself to pause and scrutinize a desire, she merely paused and scrutinized it—and then went ahead and did what she desired.

It may be considered peculiar that a girl who had inherited a newspaper as Carmel had done, should have paid so cursory a first visit. It would have been natural to rush into the shop with enthusiasm and to poke into corners and to ransack the place from end to end, and to discover exactly what it was she



a communication to the citizens of this village through the medium of your columns."

had become the owner of. However, Carmel merely dropped in and hurried away. This was repression. It was a distinct victory over impulse. She wanted very much to stay, and so she compelled herself to turn her back and to go staidly to lunch at the hotel.

She ate very little and was totally unaware of the sensation she created in the dining-room, especially over at the square table, which was regarded as the property of visiting commercial travelers. It was her belief that she gave off an impression of dignity such as befitted an editor, and that a stern, businesslike air sat upon her so that none could mistake the fact that she was a woman of affairs. Truthfulness compels the record that she did not give this impression at all, but quite another one. She looked a lovely schoolgirl about to go canoeing, with a box of bonbons on her lap. The commercial travelers who were so unfortunate as to be seated with their backs toward her acquired cricks in their necks.

After dinner (in a day or two she would learn not to refer to the midday meal as luncheon) she compelled herself to go up

to her room and to remain there for a full fifteen minutes. After this exercise so beneficial to her will, she descended and walked very slowly to the office of the *Free Press*. Having thus given free rein to her bent for repression, she became herself again. She pounced upon the office; she pounced upon the shop. She made friends with the cylinder press much as an ordinary individual would make friends with a nice dog, and she talked to the little job-press as to a kitten, and became greatly excited over the great blade of the paper-cutter, and wanted Tubal to give her an instant lesson in the art of sticking type. For two hours she played with things. Then, of a sudden, it occurred to her to wonder if a living could be made out of the outfit.

It was essential that the paper should provide her with a living, and that it should go about the business of doing so almost instantly. At the moment when Carmel first set foot in Gibsons she was alone in the world. Old man Nupley had been her last remaining relative. And—what was even more productive of unease of mind—she was the owner of exactly seventy-two dollars and sixteen cents!

Therefore she pounced upon the records of the concern and very quickly discovered that old man Nupley had left her no placer mine out of which she could wash a pan of gold before breakfast. She had, she found, become the owner of the right to pay off a number of pressing debts. The plant was mortgaged. It owed for paper; there were installments due on the job-press; there were bills for this, that and the other thing which amounted to a staggering total.

She was not daunted, however, until she examined the credit side of the affair. The year had brought the *Free Press* a grand total of five hundred and sixty-one paid subscriptions; the advertising, at the absurd rate of fifteen cents an inch, had been what politicians call scattering; and the job-work had hardly paid for the trouble of keeping the dust off the press. The paper was dead on its feet, as so many rural weeklies are. She could not help thinking that her Uncle Nupley had died in the nick of time to avoid bankruptcy.

It is worth recording that Carmel did not weep a tear of disappointment, nor feel an impulse to walk out of the place and go the thousand miles back to Michigan to take the job of teaching English in the home high-school. No. The only emotion Carmel felt was anger. Her eyes actually glinted, and a red spot made its appearance upon each cheek. She had arrived in Gibeon with a glowing illusion packed in her trunk; unkind fact had snatched it away and replaced it with clammy reality.

She got up from her desk and walked into the shop where Tubal was pretending to be busy.

"Gibeon is the county seat, isn't it?" she asked.

"Yes'm."

"How many people live here?"

"We claim two thousand. Ol' man Nupley allowed the' was four thousand in the town—township as you say out West."

"Then"—her manner put Tubal in the wrong at once and compelled him to fumble about for a defense—"why have we only a little more than five hundred subscribers?"

"Wa-all, one thing or another, seems as though. Folks never took to this paper much. Mostly they take in the *Standard* from over to Litchfield."

"Why?"

TUBAL shifted the blame to Gibeon. "Seems like this haint much of a town. It's a dum funny town. I guess folks didn't set much store by this paper, on account of Abner Fownes."

"Abner Fownes? Who is he, and what has he to do with it?"

"Abner," said Tubal, "comes clost to bein' a one-man band. Uh-huh! Owns the sawmills, owns half of Main Street, owns the Congo Church, and the circuit judge and the selectmen, and kind of claims to own all the folks that lives here. Ol' man Nupley was a kind of errand-boy of his'n."

Carmel's intuition carried her to the point. "And the people didn't take this paper because they didn't trust it. That was it, wasn't it—because this Abner Fownes—owned Uncle Nupley."

"I calc'late," said Tubal, "you're twittin' on facts." He chuckled. "Las' fall the folks kind of riz ag'in' Abner and dum high tromped on him at election-time. Yes sir! Made a fight fer it, but they didn't elect nobody but one sheriff. Good man, too; but Abner was too slick for 'em, and he run off with all the other offices. He holds a chattel mortgage onto this plant."

"Is he a bad man?"

"Wa-all, I dunno's a feller could call him bad. Jest pig-headed, like, and got the idee nobody knows nothin' but him. My notion is he gits bamboozled a lot. That courthouse crowd ickles his ribs and makes him work for 'em. No, he haint bad. Deacon and all that."

"The local politicians flatter him and make use of the power his money gives him—is that it?"

"You hit the nail plumb on the head."

"Who is the real boss?"

"Wa-all, now, that's kind of hard to say. Kind of a ring—half a dozen of 'em! Calc'late Supervisor Delorme is close to peinin' the queen bee."

She could visualize Abner Fownes, smug, fatuous, in a place of power which he did not know how to use, a figurehead and cat's-paw for abler and wickeder men. It must be confessed that her interest in him was not civic but personal. He was, at that moment, of no importance to her except as the man who held a chattel mortgage on her plant, and whose influence over her uncle had withered the possible prosperity of the paper.

She was saying to herself: "I've got to find a way. I've got to make a success of this. I can't go back home and admit I

couldn't do it. Everybody said I couldn't run a paper. But I can, I can."

The field was there, a prosperous town with a cultivated countryside to the south, and rich forest lands to north and west. There was a sufficient population to support well a weekly paper; there was all of Main Street, two dozen merchants large and small, whose advertising patronage should flow in to the *Free Press*. "What it needs," she told herself, "is somebody to get behind and push."

As a matter of fact she was convinced the failure of the paper was not due to Abner Fownes, nor to politics or outside influences, but to the lack of initiative and ability of her uncle. So much of the town as she had seen was rather pleasing; it had no appearance of resting over subterranean caverns of evil; nor had the men and women she saw on the streets the appearance of being ground down by one man's wealth, or of smarting under the rule of an evil political ring. On the contrary, it seemed an ordinary town, full of ordinary people, who lived ordinary lives in reasonable happiness. She discounted Tubal's disclosures and jumped to a conclusion. No, she told herself, if she proved adequate, there was no reason why she should not succeed where Uncle Nupley had failed.

THE telephone interrupted her reflections, and she lifted the receiver.

"Is this the *Free Press*?" asked a voice.

"Yes."

"Wait a moment, please."

After some delay another voice, a large, important voice, repeated the question, and Carmel admitted a second time the identity of the paper.

"This," said the voice, evidently impressed by the revelation it was making, "is Abner Fownes."

"Yes," said Carmel.

"Are you the young woman—Nupley's niece?"

"I am."

"Will you step over to my office at once, then? I want to see you."

Carmel's eyes twinkled, and her brows lifted. "Abner Fownes—" she said. "The name has a masculine sound. Your voice is—distinctly masculine?"

"Eh? What of it?"

"Why," said Carmel, "the little book I studied in school says that when a gentleman wishes to see a lady, he goes to her. I fear I should be thought forward if I called on you."

"Not at all, not at all," said the voice, and Carmel knew she had to deal with a man in whom resided no laughter.

"I shall be glad to see you whenever you find it convenient to call," she said—and hung up the receiver.

As she turned about, she saw a young man standing outside the railing, a medium-sized young man who wore his shoulders slightly rounded, and spectacles of the largest and most glittering variety. The collar of his coat asked loudly to be brushed, and his tie had the appearance of having been tied with one hand in a dark bedroom. He removed his hat and displayed a head of extraordinarily fine formation. It was difficult to tell if he were handsome, because the rims of his spectacles masked so much of his face, and because his expression was one of gloomy wrath. Carmel was tempted to laugh at the expression because it did not fit; it gave the impression of being a left-over expression, purchased at a reduction, and a trifle large for its wearer.

"May I ask," he said in a voice exactly suited to his stilted diction, "if you are in charge of this—er—publication?"

"I am," said Carmel.

"I wish," said the young man, "to address a communication to the citizens of this village through the—er—medium of your columns."

So this, thought Carmel, was the sort of person who wrote letters to newspapers. She had often wondered what the species looked like.

"On what subject?" she asked.

"Myself," said he.

"It should be an interesting letter," Carmel said mischievously.

The young man lowered his head a trifle and peered at her over the rims of his glasses. He pursed his mouth and wrinkled one cheek, studying her as a naturalist might scrutinize some interesting but not altogether comprehensible bug. Evidently he could not make up his mind as to her classification.

"I fancy it will be found so," he said.

"May I ask your name?"

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"Mrs. Churchill," she said, "if this is true, then there are men here in Gibeon who are not fit to walk the earth!"

He fumbled about in an inner pocket and continued to fumble until the procedure became an exploration. He produced numerous articles and laid them methodically upon the railing—a fountain pen, dripping slightly, half a dozen letters, a large harmonica, a pocket edition of Plato's "Republic," a notebook, several pencils and a single glove. He stared at the glove with recognition and nodded to it meaningfully as much as to say, "Ah, there you are again—hiding as usual!" At last he extracted a leather wallet and from the wallet produced a card which he extended toward Carmel.

Before she read it, she had a feeling there would be numerous letters upon it, and she was not disappointed. It said:

EVAN BARTHOLOMEW PELL, A.B., A.M., Ph.D., LL.D.

"Ah!" said Carmel.

"Yes," said the young man with some complacency.

"And your letter?"

"I am," he said, "or more correctly, I *was*, superintendent of schools in this village. There are, as you know, three schools,

only one of which gives instruction in the so-called high-school branches."

"Indeed!" said Carmel.

"I have been removed," he said, and stared at her with lips compressed. When she failed to live up to his expectations in her display of amazement, he repeated his statement.

"Removed," said Carmel.

"Removed—unjustly and unwarrantably removed—autocratically and tyrannically removed. I am a victim of nepotism. I have, I fancy, proven adequate; indeed, I may say it is rare to find a man of my attainments in so insignificant a position. But I have been cast out upon the streets arbitrarily, that a corrupt and self-seeking group of professional politicians may curry favor with a man more corrupt than themselves. In short and in colloquial terms, I have been kicked out to provide a place for Supervisor Delorme's cousin."

Carmel nodded. "And you wish to protest."

"I desire to lay before the public my (Continued on page 142)

No other character in present-day fiction has captivated readers as has the Information Kid, the hero of this story

The Miracle

By GERALD BEAUMONT

Illustrated by Charles Sarka



OLD Ramon Alvarez, who had aggressive black whiskers and extremely red pants, was tipped off to the killing on Sweet Arbutus in the last race at Tia Juana. This explains why Colorado Jones, instead of Billy Talbot, was granted the casino concession at Enseñada, on the west coast, where it was planned to construct a resort that should be open every day in the year to all save prohibitionists, the police and other pharisees.

Colorado was a smart man. His second move was to send the Information Kid across the line, knowing that this whimsical child of the race-track could absorb more knowledge in less time, and get his hunches straighter, than any other person in the Jones circle of acquaintanceship.

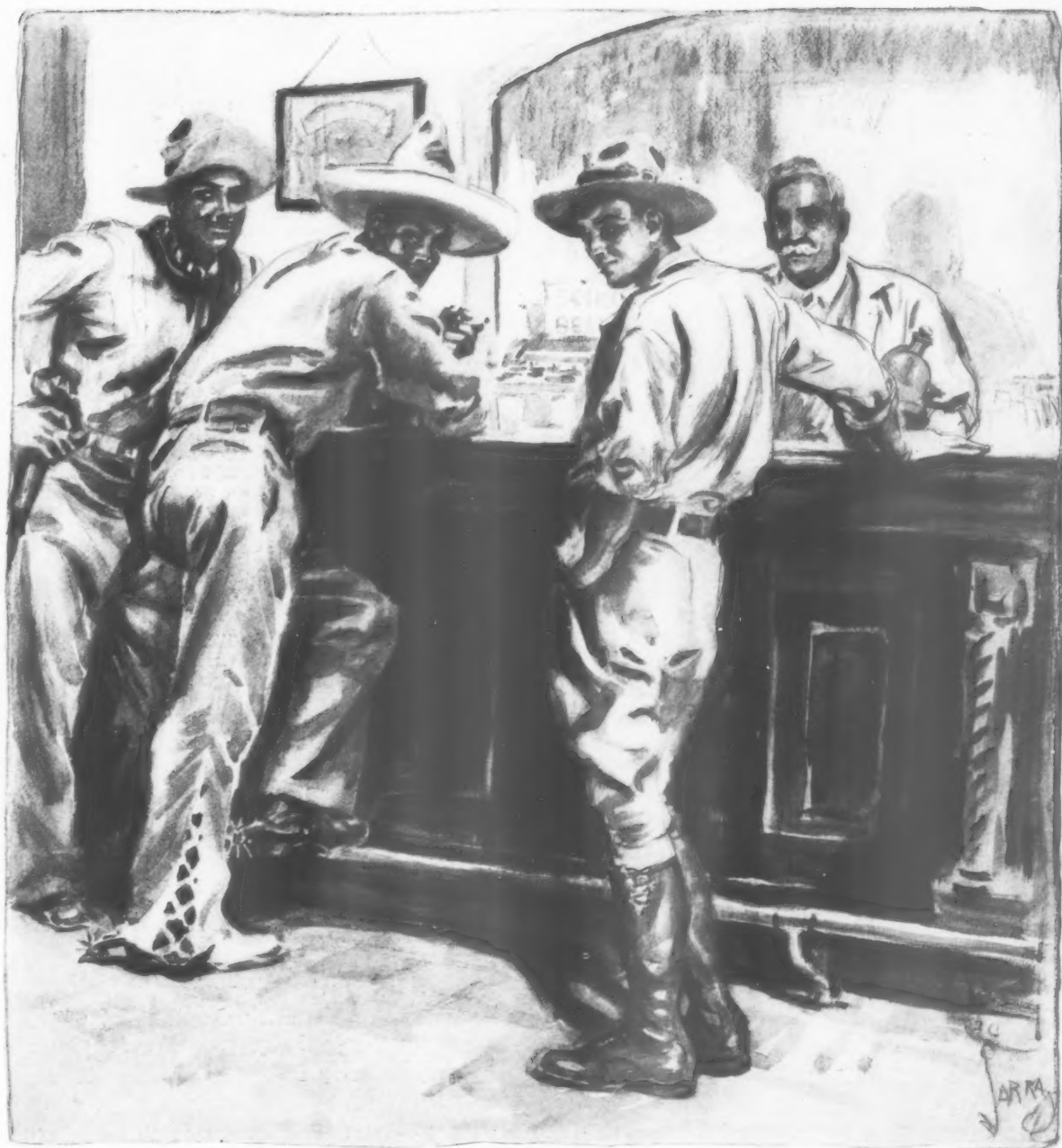
Now Lower California is, and always has been, a land of mystery, romance, miracles and fleas. The Information Kid—twenty-four years old, sandy-haired and ripe in the wisdom of the race-track free lance—stayed at Enseñada two weeks, made copious notations, and came back with a silver crucifix, a bullet-hole in his shoulder and a sublime hunch that he had left his heart forever with Conchita Rico, who was only thirteen. Of this you shall hear.

South from Tia Juana for nearly four hundred miles runs the ghost of El Camino Real, the first royal highway. There is another road now by that name; it traverses California proper, and is a modern thing of macadam and concrete, marked with sign posts and bronze bells, and infested with tourists and motor-cops. But Lower California has the first carved trail. Its sands bore the imprint of Pais and Conchitis, then friar and Jesuit, then conquering *Americanos*, who are strange people, for they alone give back the land which they win. Lower California has seen the brush and dust of the centuries transformed into golden grain-fields and green mission fields that stretched like a rosary the length of the peninsula. Then came ten thousand Indians with torch and war-whoop to wipe out the mission miracle. Later American marines and New York volunteers, by the grace of God and Yankee blood conquered the land, then relinquished it. For what reason? *Quién sabe?*

Six years later a gray-eyed man of destiny, accompanied by a

handful of lanky Kentuckians and a few rawboned gentlemen from Tennessee, sailed down from San Francisco, whipped a hundred times his number, raised the flag of a slave State and finally yielded honors to the twin devils of famine and pestilence, after waiting in vain for American recognition.

All these things have been forgotten except by such people as Maria Rico, who places her age at one hundred and fifty, and who sits all day long at the inn of Santos Rico, her grandson, dreaming of the last padres, and looking off toward the hill ruins of Nuestra Señora de las Candelas. Some day Our Lady of the Candles, Blessed Protectress of the Pure, will illuminate the hill again, and drive all the devils from this foolish world. Maria Rico has said it; and *mira*,—look you,—Maria is very old!



So, then, between the bay of Todos Santos de Enseñada and the Mission San Miguel, travelers stop for the night at the *posada* of Santos Rico, where the frijoles are kept bubbling in the iron pot, where the bed-linen is freshened by Teresa the *lavandera*, and where Conchita Rico waits on the table.

The Rio Grande divides two countries by four centuries, it is said, but the silver-and-chocolate dragon of rivers disdains Lower California. Wherefore, American ideas concerning colonization, cocktails, roulette and race-tracks are slowly eating into the land of sand and sun. Old Santos bought his daughter American clothes, and imported for his customers American drinks. But there still remained frijoles and fiestas, cock-fights, and the nightly litany. There was a tractor in the barn, the despair of Manuel the muleteer; but on the other hand—there remained the nine dancing parties that preceded Christmas, when Santos Rico's guests, bearing lighted candles, wandered in procession through the inn, seeking vain shelter at closed doors as did Joseph and Mary. Always at the tenth verse of the chant, sung at the tenth door, admittance was secured, and there they found old Maria Rico mumbling beside a miniature manger.

Being Maria's great-granddaughter, Conchita believed likewise that the Blessed Protectress of the Pure would one day return to her habitation on the hill, and to the end that this miracle might be speedily consummated, Conchita burned a candle at San Miguel, each time placing two *centavos* in the box for the privilege.

But instead of the desired apparition there arrived one Sunday the Information Kid, flea-bitten, thirsty and outrageously profane. Mass having been already said at San Miguel, the guests of Santos Rico were now becoming pleasantly drunk. Dolefully the Kid withheld his entry from the Bacchus Handicap, having learned by sad experience that hot liquor and cold business do not mix. He stuck by *agua fria* and kickless cigarettes, looking disapprovingly, meanwhile, upon the world.

So it happened that when Pancho Escalante, biggest and blackest of little Conchita's seven suitors, stuck a knife between the ribs of Suitor Number Four, and then lurched on the trail of the fleeing child, the Kid thrust out his right foot, and two hundred and fifty pounds of Mexican beef descended with more or less violence.

"Pleasant dreams," adjured the Kid. "Santos, I win one cigar!"

But the copper-hued individual on the floor had other plans for rewarding the Kid's footwork. He dragged his bulk upward and lurched toward the lithe American.

"It is not verree good to have such big feet, señor," he grumbled. One hand dropped to his belt, fumbled and came up with six inches of sharp steel. "Not verree good," he repeated, and swayed forward.

The Information Kid had once served in the corner of the Philadelphia Phantom. He advanced two long steps, northwest by southeast, missing the descending knife, and getting the twist of his shoulder under a right uppercut that traveled but a few inches, yet was none the less effective. Once more the floor shook.

"Two cigars, Santos," the Kid recorded. "I'll be going good in a minute."

He kicked the knife through the open door, and prodded the prostrate figure with his shoe. "Outside, *hombre*," he urged. "Outside, or I'll smear you from here to the border. Vamoose *muy pronto*—get me? Take the air!"

Pancho Escalante achieved his feet a second time, attempted dizzily to negotiate the door, failed, and was propelled violently from the rear in the correct direction. Before wreaking vengeance on his strawberry roan, Pancho returned to the doorway to belch a warning into Santos Rico's barroom.

"Leetle *Americano* peeg!" he roared. "I go, but *por Dios*, I come back! You look out, leetle peeg!"

"Raspberry!" said the Kid. "You show up around here again, and I'll put your ears in a tamale."

"Name of a dog!"

The Kid plunged for the door, stopped—and returned, grinning. Presently all could hear the hoof-beats of the strawberry roan along the white road. Pancho was not loitering.

JOYFULLY the proprietor of the inn pounded his guest on the shoulder. "*Cielo santo!* What grand *caballero!* What a verree brave *Americano!* Mark you, the knife means nothing—twice do I see great Pancho with his heels in the hair. *Ay! Ay! Quo quiere Ud., señor?* The drinks are free for nodings. But señor—you should carry the *pistola*. Assuredly Pancho will come back and bring his *amigos*. They are bad mens, señor—*pero*, who can beat the *Americanos?*"

"Aw, dry up," yawned the Kid. "You get me some more mosquito netting. That thing over my bed has more holes in it than a Swiss cheese."

"*Por cierto*," Santos agreed. "I will have Conchita bring it. The Señor shall have entirely new netting from the store. —Oh, Conchita!"

"I come," replied Conchita, and appeared with a rose in her hair—a rose that had been plucked, mind you, since the young *Señor Americano* had fought so bravely in her defense. Santos Rico bellowed his orders, and his daughter smiled shyly upon the Information Kid.

"If the Señor would be so good as to come with me," she purred, "we shall perhaps together the very best netting find, and he shall to his heart's desire indicate the quantity."

O-hé, and Conchita was but thirteen!

Not all the miracles of Lower California ended with the eighteenth century. Blizzards still smite the mountain peaks, while down below the blood-hot bosom of the desert feeds the youngest and fairest flowers. Santos Rico's daughter saw to it that the object of her search was not located until she had first found her guitar, and perched atop the counter to sing *paisano* airs that her mother, and her mother's mother, had sung through half-closed eyes to their admirers. Thus she sat for an hour, a child with the face of a Madonna, the heart of a woman and the grace of a tropical butterfly. In her veins flowed the blood of Andalusia, which is everything from Phœnician to Visigoth. She was Conchita, and she had put a rose in her hair, because she was thirteen, and a handsome young *Americano* had elected to fight in her behalf.

What need is there of mosquito-netting when Conchita sings? The Protector of the Pure tilted back on his chair, hooked his heels upon the counter, smoked endless cigarettes and was curiously content. Mentally he rendered the verdict:

"One cute little doll, I'll say. Figures just about twenty points better than anything I've ever lamped. All by herself on this track, and any old weight. I should have bumped that greaser off while I was about it!"

Now, had it been Dogie Brown, or Noisy Ned, or Boots O'Neil on whom little Conchita looked so archly, it would have been

much better had she found the netting right away, and all by herself; but the Information Kid was wise beyond his years, and he judged the child accurately. Life was a merry-go-round for the Kid. Along the path of the ponies he had traveled from Canada to New Orleans, from Saratoga to Tia Juana, and the revolving scenery had shown him life from many angles. Of women he knew but two classes—good and bad. Being a spotted sheep, he passed up the former; and being wise, he avoided the latter.

Conchita sang:

"I have no glass to quench thy thirst,
No cup to ease thy drouth,
Pero tengo mia bocita—
But I have my mouth—"

"Consider, señor—you shall stay until Tuesday."

"Well, you lose that bet, little one," the Kid decided. "By tomorrow night I'll be pounding my ear at San Diego."

"Oh, but no!" she protested. "On the night of the tomorrow, my father gives a *baile*, and I shall dance with but you."

"Not unless I'm daft, you wont," said the Kid ungallantly. "I can't shoot any better than I can dance, and unless I miss my guess, your fat friend has gone after all his relatives."

"Pancho is a mos' wecked man," sighed Conchita. "I too am afraid if it were not for our Blessed Lady on the hill, to whom always I pray. Maria have said, señor, that some night the miracle will come again when the pure are in danger. Look you, no harm shall befall either of us, for I shall on thee bestow the thrice-blessed *crucifijo de plata* from around my neck. Maria herself has obtained it from Padre Pio Blanco, who was from Seville. *Ay—ay! See!*"

Small hands drew from her bosom a silver crucifix suspended from a delicately wrought chain.

"Bend your head, señor!"

"Nix, little sister, nix," said the Kid gently. "I was only kidding. Put your little luck-piece back where it belongs, and don't worry none about me. I'm a pretty tough *muchacho* when I get my back up."

Conchita descended from the counter and stamped one tiny foot imperiously. "Foolish one! Do I not my mind know? Am I not past thirteen by two months?"

"You ought to know," the Kid replied, "but what's the answer?"

"That you shall dance with Conchita as she has said, and you shall always the sacred charm wear that no harm shall ever befall thee! T'sst—the smoke is in my eyes; but bend thee down!"

Dubiously the Kid complied.

"You're pinning a blue ribbon on a selling plater, kiddo," he informed her, "but go as far as you like if you get a kick out of it. Now, now, little sister, I can fix my own hair. Sing that 'Paloma' thing again."

"If I do, you will stay, *amigo mio*? Only until the night of the tomorrow! Conchita desires it, oh, mos' much!"

"Oh, well," sighed the Kid, "I suppose I'm cuckoo, but I guess I can stick around until Tuesday morning. I'm traveling ahead of schedule, anyway."

Conchita clapped her hands. "Now I shall the netting find, and entirely surround your bed so that you may sleep in peace."

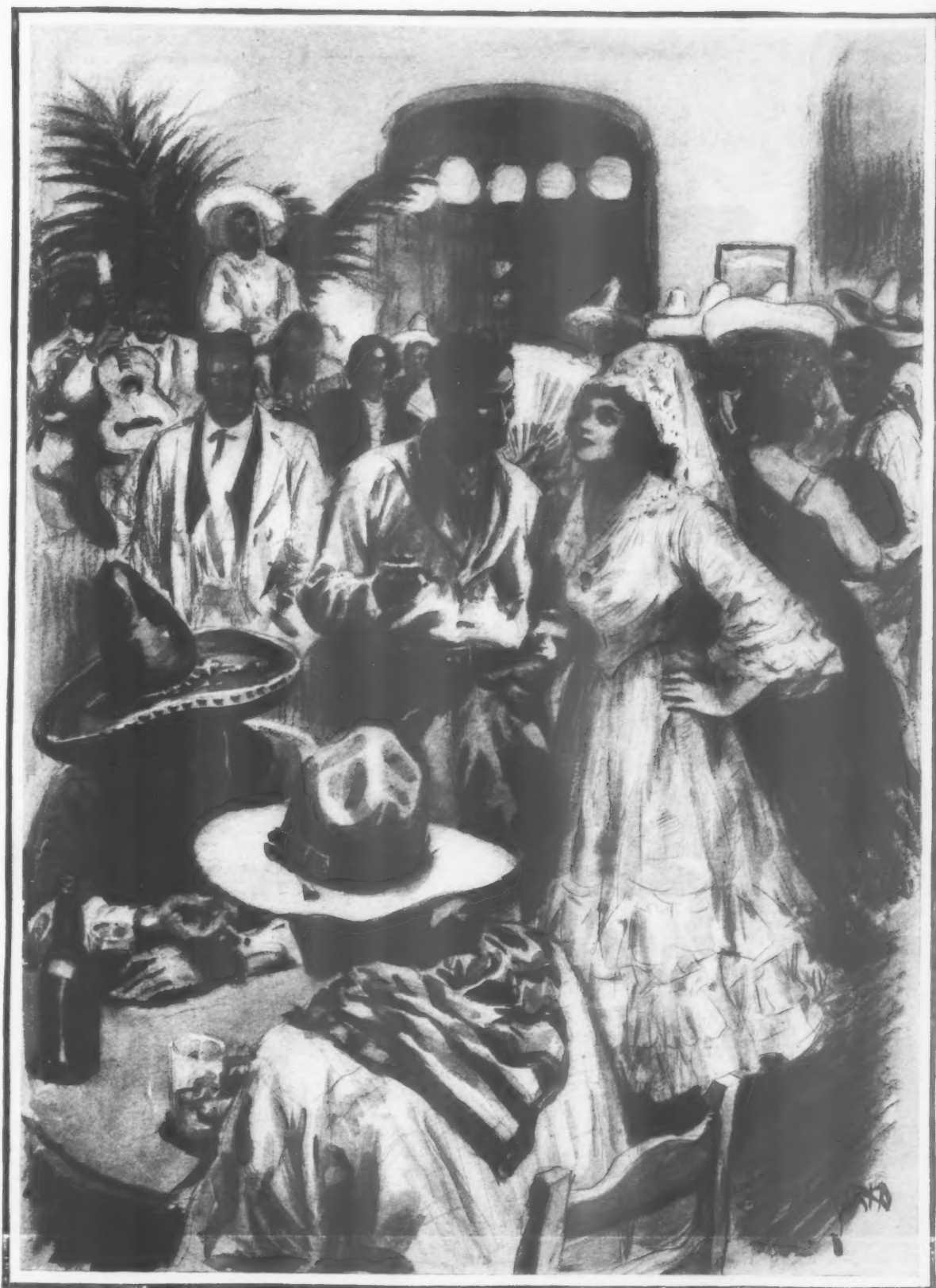
THE Protector of the Pure kicked off his shoes early that night, but before composing himself for slumber, he contemplated for several minutes his newly acquired talisman.

"At that," he mused, "there may be something in it. Frenchy Bonville ran a lock of hair into twenty thousand dollars at Reno last season; I seen him do it. Wouldn't my old lady be tickled to see a crucifix around little Willy's neck? Cute little trick, that Conchita! I'll play the cross and see what happens."

In the morning his waking thought was that he had better dress and depart, but there came to him the chant of a small voice from the kitchen below—and the stage rolled off without him. O-hé, it is ever thus when Conchita is happy, and sings!

They spent the morning wandering over the *ranchita*, and in the afternoon they sprawled dreamily on the rich mesquite grass by the *arroyo seco*, staring at the huge five-fingered cacti—"fingers of the dead pointing to heaven," the natives call them. Does it matter of what they talked? The heart speaks sometimes from deep-irised eyes, and then again expresses itself through rings of cigarette-smoke blown slowly skyward.

But the glory of Lower California is reserved for the night. For then comes a silver moon with gold fireflies dancing against sea-green velvet, and there is wine in the air. So in the evening, when the guitars and mandolins were beginning to strum and



Conchita's eyes sparkled. "Is it then, señor, you will be satisfied to dance with but me?"

tinkle, and surrounding native villagers answered the lure, Conchita appeared in a billowy white creation with her hair dressed high, and adorned with a red rose and a most marvelous comb.

"Look what's toddled out of the nursery!" ejaculated the Information Kid. "Wow!"

Conchita's eyes sparkled, and she spread her fan.

"Is it then, señor, you will be satisfied to dance with but me?"

"Oh, it's Jake with me, all right," he grinned, "but I'll inform the cock-eyed world I'm going to need this crucifix before the night's over. Yea, bo! Pipe all the dirty looks from the paddock!"

But what should a man care for evil mutterings along the wall, when

through a door leading into the dining-room, and was pressing his weight against the lock, when green lights exploded in his brain, and his legs bent under him. The butt of a forty-five, even when wielded by one who is very drunk, is an effective anesthetic.

When the Kid's mind again began to function, he was securely bound to a chair in the little stone cellar to which steps led downward from Santos Rico's store-room. Pancho Escalante was breathing heavily in his face; Pancho's hands were fumbling in the Kid's pockets.

"O-ho, leetle *Americano* peeg, you are awake, no? That is ver' good. By and by you will sleep plenty. *Por Dios*, yes! *Ver'* long time, leetle peeg. But first Pancho shall have



there is wine in the air, and he floats with Conchita in his arms? If the Kid backed a long shot, it was always right on the nose with all he had. So now, with the thrice-blessed crucifix about his neck, he swung over the floor with a thirteen-year-old Madonna, and recked not of consequences.

Thus the evening aged, until along the white road came Pancho Escalante to redeem his promise with the aid of nine *compañeros*, all exceedingly full of courage and raw *pulque*. There was much preliminary shooting and yelling, so that the orchestra had time to crawl out through the windows, and old Santos Rico could bar the rotten door that later gave way at the first volley of kicks.

"Oh, *santo Dios*!" cried little Conchita. "This way, beloved. In the little room—"

The Kid twisted loose from the clinging arms of his partner.

"Duck out, quick!" he snapped. "This is my party. —Here, Teresa!" He spun the child into the grasp of the little laundress. "Get her away quick! Beat it!"

He shoved the struggling figures

the money to buy his *amigos* some more *deenk*."

"Help yourself," snarled the Kid. "Believe me, boy, you'll need your hooch when I get out of here!"

The Mexican's hands, exploring his victim's shirt, touched the little chain. He grunted in satisfaction.

The Kid pulled back, his eyes hot steel. "Look out, Mex! You gyp me out of that, and I'll sure give you a free ride to hell: I'm telling you now!"

The answer was a tug that snapped the chain. With his free hand, the seventh suitor of Conchita Rico struck his captive across the mouth.

"Leetle poodle dog, it is not ver' good to have both the bigness of feet and the mouth. *Válgame Dios*, it is the *crucifijo* of the *muchacha*!"

The Kid swayed dizzily in his chair. "She gave it to me. Drop it, you greaser."

Blacker grew the face of Pancho Escalante. He pocketed the little silver crucifix that once had been blessed by Pio Blanco. Then he hesitated between a great thirst for quick revenge, and an equally powerful thirst of immediate *pulque*. The shouting of his *compañeros* in the barroom depressed the scales on the side of Bacchus.

"You have lie, leetle peeg," he hissed. "Mira, look you, (Continued on page 154)

"It was the miracle!" cried Conchita eagerly. "Look you at the hill. The candle-lights can still be seen."

The Quarter-Million Note

By LAWRENCE PERRY

Illustrated by James E. Allen

Here is a story in which is revealed the real fiber of a man's character in the great crisis of his life

JAY HAPGOOD glanced involuntarily toward his chauffeur as he stepped into his motor-car, which was waiting in the accustomed place by the station platform. The man had saluted impersonally as usual and with characteristic negligence had reached back and opened the tonneau door. But to Hapgood there seemed about him an unwonted aspect of smug stolidity as of one who was unshakably contented with his lot, whose whole philosophy of life and being, indeed, was perfectly satisfactory to him.

Hapgood smiled sardonically as he dropped into the broad seat and gazed at the man's thickly set back. Who wouldn't be a chauffeur if he had a chance? Or a plumber, or trolley-car motorman, or, in fact, any sort of man whose calling discounts the need of highly organized mentality and is independent of those treacherous processes which underlie the 'modern system of supply and demand?

From the rear came an insistent honk; as Hapgood's car obediently swerved to one side a touring car swept by, the occupant of the rear seat, a rather stout man of florid countenance, gesturing in solemn salutation. Hapgood flushed. He held a match in his hand; an unlighted cigarette was in his mouth.



The author of this and other stories in this magazine is an authority on all the expensive sports, from polo to yachting

Unthinking, he swept the match against the back of the seat, leaned forward and applied the flame to the cigarette. Then, as though dazed, he sat back regarding the vivid scratch he had made on the polished surface of the car. That was what the mere sight of Warren Fletcher, president of the Shawnee National Bank, had done for him. It was a symbol, that scratch.

Hapgood found himself the victim of a curious impression as the motor turned into the graveled driveway of his estate. It was not as pretentious as many along this section of the Westchester shore, but none was trimmer or more artistic. Now he caught himself viewing the rough-stone boundary-wall, the lawn and its trees and shrubbery with the objective stare of a stranger. It surprised him a bit to find how beautiful it all was. Rather rough on a fellow to begin fully to appreciate a thing just at the time when he is about to lose it! Still, he ruminated, that is the way with most of the simian folk who call themselves human beings. . . . "Never miss the water till the well runs dry." The jingling sentence held him. His lips trembled in a muttered oath when he realized that he was repeating it over and over.

At the doorway he found

Prentice, the sailing-master of his racing schooner, awaiting him. The thought occurred to Hapgood that he was paying this gnarled, weather-beaten man several thousand dollars to conduct an enterprise that amounted to nothing other than mere amusement. Other sums involved in the upkeep and maintenance of his yacht drifted across his mind like sinister clouds.

"Good evening, Captain." His voice was brusque, a contrast to his usual manner with the old racing skipper. "What is it?"

"I tried out the new foresail this morning, Mr. Hapgood. Fits like a glove, now. There was a bit of a wrinkle in the luff; but it stretched out fine. You'll find a difference in the boat tomorrow."

Hapgood hesitated, then frowned and gestured.

"I'm not going to sail on the *Wanderer* tomorrow, Prentice." Noting the man's perplexed expression he explained. "Got to go down to the office. Things haven't been going well for me in the—" He broke off suddenly, inwardly cursing whatever weakness it was that had made him begin the sentence.

Prentice grunted unsympathetically.

"Ought to be the kind of a race you've been lookin' for all season, Mr. Hapgood. There'll be more than a capful of wind tomorrow—regular schooner weather. The *Wanderer* will have the best chance she's had to show Mr. Fletcher's hooker what a clean wake looks like."

"Yes." Hapgood's eyes were vacuous. Mention of Warren Fletcher's name had started him off on another trend of thought. He would wager that Fletcher's skipper never exchanged badinage with his owner, that he knew his place and threw in a couple of "sirs" every sentence. He shrugged and turned toward the doorway.

"Sorry, Prentice. You'll have to sail without me. Drop in tomorrow evening and tell me how badly you were beaten. I want to talk with you anyway."

"All right." The skipper turned upon his heel and made his way down a path leading to the water where the *Wanderer's* launch lay.

The aspect of strangeness which had marked the grounds was carried out in the house. Hapgood had never been the sort of man who looks upon his possessions with proprietary glow. Always he had taken them as a matter of course, as the mere background of living. Now, as he glanced about the broad hall with its dark carved furnishings, its wainscot shelves with their bits of statuary and vases, the rough-stone fireplace, he realized the unobtrusive, yet significant place they held in his life.

From the dining-room he heard the voice of his wife in converse with the butler. He had taken her pretty much for granted, too. Her voice at the moment had precisely the tones which had thrilled him when he first heard them more than sixteen years ago, low, full and musical. As she entered the hallway, tall and gracious, still very beautiful, he started, staring at her.

"Hello, dear." She was smiling. "How did the day go?"

Hapgood's throat clicked. Must he

lose her, too? Alison Hapgood was a woman born to utilize all the finer embellishments of life. Everything they owned meant something definite to her. He could not imagine her in the drab setting of comparative poverty.

"Not so good, Alison," he said. "See you at dinner." He went to his room.

When he came downstairs, physically freshened by his bath and change of clothes, the sunlight had gone and the trees were deep in shadow. Taking a cigarette from the table and lighting it, he went out on the rear veranda giving upon the Sound. Here he was accustomed to walk until dinner was announced, smoking and meditating idly.

But now, somehow, he couldn't stand it. Throwing away his cigarette with a jerk, he turned into the house, striding through the various rooms with quick nervous tread until he saw the butler lighting the candles in the dining-room. His wife met him at the doorway, slipping her arm through his as they went to the table. Hapgood could not remember whether she had done that recently or not. Once it had been a little habit of theirs.

He did remember that ordinarily they talked more at table. Conversationally this meal was made up of a few perfunctory remarks. With the coffee the butler withdrew. Instinctively Hapgood turned his gaze out the window toward the Sound; for it was at this hour each evening that the Fall River boat passed by. And there it was plying its stately way, ablaze with lights.

Hapgood followed it until a clump of trees shut it from view; and then, feeling his wife's eyes upon him, he turned to her.

"Jay," she asked, "what's been the matter with you? Tell me, wont you?"

He shrugged, his gaze fixed upon an ash receiver in which he was tapping his cigar. But she was persistent.

"I've suspected for a week that you were in trouble, dear. Business, I've imagined. I haven't spoken to you because—well, because you have not made your business a part of my life. I've not known quite what to say. But you know, of course, that I wish to help you in any way I can. Is there any way?"

Alison Hapgood winced at his reply, which carried that shading of contempt—unconscious in this case—which marks the attitude of the producing partner toward the nonproducer in time of serious stress.

"Not unless you can dig up two hundred and fifty thousand dollars for me by Monday."

"Two hundred and fifty thousand dollars! Heavens, Jay! Why?"

"Because we owe it to the Shawnee National Bank and if it isn't paid—"

"We—owe?"

"Why, I mean the company, of course. It is a note the bank holds. Our orders have been bad; collections worse. Money is tight and the banks are calling in their loans. The Shawnee has called ours. And we haven't the money to pay—not now."

"But Jay, I don't think I quite understand. You will have the money, wont you?"

"On Monday? No."

"I don't mean Monday. Sometime."



The skipper made his way down to where the *Wanderer's* launch lay.



He saw his wife in the doorway. He flung the glass to the floor.

"Why, yes; certainly. That is, we will have if the Shawnee doesn't squeeze us."

"Well—of course." She looked at him, smiling. "All you have to do is to go to Warren Fletcher and convince him of this."

"Just like that, eh?" Hapgood raised his eyebrows. "Banks don't work that way," he added somberly. "Not these days, anyway. They'd rather have sixty cents on the dollar than take a chance of getting nothing. Unless, of course, you owe so much they don't dare let you bust. Guess that was our only mistake—too conservative."

"But Mr. Fletcher wouldn't take a chance of getting nothing if he were—well, decent to you. You've always told me you had a good sound business."

"It is a sound business, and always has been. We've never gone off our heads and expanded beyond reason, or overfinanced ourselves, even in the flush times. Played conservative always." Hapgood arose and began to pace the floor, while his wife watched him, a curious light developing in her eyes.

"And Fletcher knows this," he went on. "Yet for the past three days he's refused to see me. Had old Hutchinson talk to me—"

"Who is Hutchinson?"

"The vice-president of the bank."

"And you haven't spoken to Mr. Fletcher?"

"No." He faced her irritably. "I told you he wouldn't see me."

"If you had seen him you could have convinced him that the loan was good?"

"I could have given him facts that ought to convince him."

"Yet those facts didn't convince Mr.—Mr.— Who did you say the vice-president was?"

"Hutchinson. No, they didn't. But he didn't want to be convinced."

"Why didn't he?"

Hapgood's reply was an irritable gesture.

"But did he tell Mr. Fletcher all you said?"

"Why—I suppose so; yes, of course he did. Hutchinson wouldn't make a decision on his own hook."

"Then you don't really know whether Fletcher knew all the facts or not?"

He turned upon her desperately.

"Alison, please; get it through your head. Fletcher doesn't want facts; he wants money. His bank holds a note of mine for a quarter-million, due on Monday. I haven't the money; can't get it under present conditions—and the bank won't renew the loan. It's a perfectly open-and-shut proposition. Fletcher wrote me a personal letter calling the loan."

"And when you tried to see him he just wouldn't bother. If he believed in you, or in the firm, he would have seen you himself, wouldn't he, and done what he could to help?"

"If he believed in me—! Just what do you mean by that, Alison?"

"Well—" She paused. "It doesn't seem to me that any bank would want to take sixty cents on a dollar if it thought that by waiting a decent time it would get the full sum."

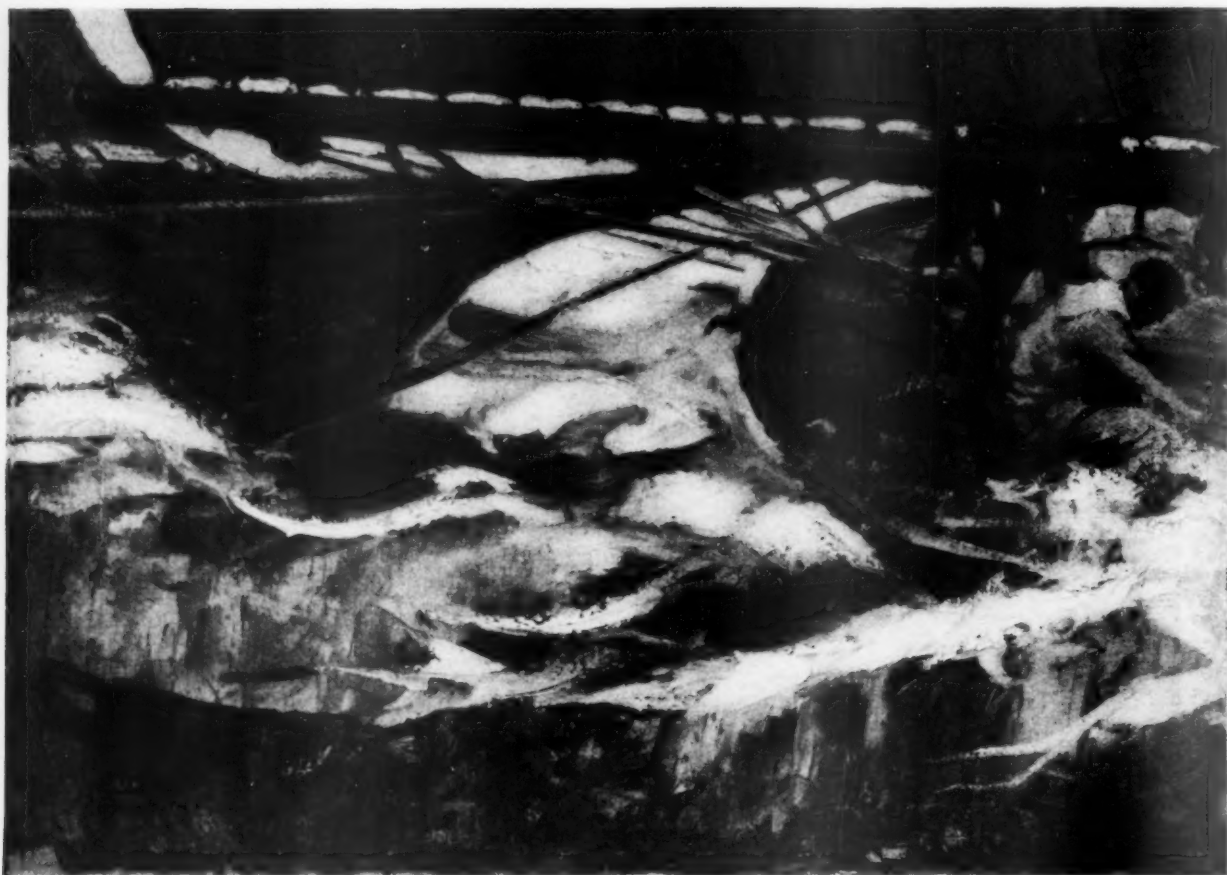
"Banks are not taking chances these days."

"But I thought you told me that your bank wouldn't be taking a chance, Jay."

He brought his hands together angrily.

"What I think is not necessarily what the Shawnee crowd might think."

She rose and came to him, her hands upon his shoulders.

Hapgood caught a glimpse of Fletcher's haggard face. The owner of the *Wanderer*

"Then it is up to you to make Mr. Fletcher think as you do." As he laughed harshly, she continued: "Oh, yes, it is, dear. Now tell me,"—her eyes narrowed,—"weren't you just a mite relieved when you went to see Fletcher and met Hutchinson instead?"

"Well—by—!" He flushed, stammered. Then he jerked his shoulders from his wife's grasp and walked toward the window. For a full minute there was silence. Then Hapgood glanced toward his wife still standing by the table. "What did you mean by that remark, Alison?"

"Do you want me to answer that question, Jay?"

"You bet I do—and quick, too."

"It may take more than a sentence. I am sure it will, really. So you must be patient. Let's go out on the veranda."

THE two made their way silently out of the house. Alison Hapgood didn't sit down. She stood by the railing, toying with the trailing end of a vine. He confronted her.

"You meant that I was afraid of Fletcher—wasn't that it?"

"Why—yes. Aren't you afraid of him, Jay?"

"I don't think it is up to me to reply to insults. You—"

She raised her hand in a quick gesture.

"Wait a moment, dear; I don't wish you to think I am trying to hurt you. It isn't that at all."

"What is it then? I want you to know I am not afraid of Fletcher or any other man."

"I know you are not afraid of him, physically. It's the money-power you fear."

"I'm a business man."

"And because you are a business man do you have to be servile?"

"Servile!"

"Jay, listen to me. Ever since we have been married Warren Fletcher has hung over us like a black cloud. Whenever you met him in the city and he was gloomy or out of sorts you would come home and both our lives would be miserable until he had condescended to bestow a smile or a cheerful word upon you.

Then we were in the seventh heaven. If he wanted some menial task done you were the one he called upon to do it—ah, don't deny it; I heard you say that to Jack Adams the night you had him up from the office for dinner."

She paused as he started to say something. But he checked himself and she went on:

"You wanted me to call upon his wife and be nice to her when they came up here to live. And I did. I tried to do everything I could for her. And just because she was the commonest and most impossible person in the world and the friends I took to see her simply wouldn't stand her, why then you acted as though I had made a hideous blunder and were not mindful of your interests. Yet I did everything I possibly could."

She walked to a chair and sat down.

"The last night they were here at dinner you seemed absolutely delighted when Fletcher showed he was attracted to me—"

"Alison, damn it all—"

"Money! Money! Money! That is what Warren Fletcher has meant and nothing else. Yet there are other banks in the city as important as the Shawnee, and certainly the Eminent Steel Products Company is not so despicable that it has to fawn even upon a bank president."

"No, not fawn," he interjected. "But these are not times when anyone can be cocky."

"There never has been a time when Warren Fletcher has not been your master, your highest god. Rather absurd, isn't it?" She tossed her hands. "Here you are, tall, strong, handsome, fine mind, popular, successful in business—"

"Successful!" His laugh was bitter.

"If success has failed you now it is only because you, yourself, have failed, because you have been willing to forget all that you should be, whenever that sleek, fat, red-faced calf is around. And he has gloried in it, fed on it. Really I can't understand why he didn't let you crawl into his office and get on your knees and then after soaking it all in for a while, agree to extend that note. That would have been a natural procedure."



cupped his hands. "You go to hell, Fletcher!" he roared.

Hapgood was listening with expressionless face, as if, indeed, the things she said were addressed to a third person.

"Jay," she went on, "I love you, as you know. You're a fine and clean and lovable man. But I want to respect you as I could respect no other man. And I want to respect myself. You say that if Fletcher doesn't help, the business will go under. Well, let it go if to keep it you have to be a bootlicker. Jay, this has been getting on my nerves so. Can't you understand? I want to look up to you. I want that more than all the money. I don't care if you're a laborer, so long as I know you're not under the yoke of some other man's personality."

He grinned derisively.

"You'd care all right when the money stopped coming in."

"I don't wonder you say that—because you have caught only the superficial side of me. Most women never let men see the deeper things, for fear they'll laugh, or at least not understand. But now I mean everything I'm saying."

He regarded her closely.

"Has Fletcher been pestering or insulting you or anything?"

"Of course not. If he had it would be my fault. It isn't personal; won't you understand that? It's *you*. It's my ideal of you. As for your working as a laborer, don't you think I know your capabilities, how keen you are—and—and—well, able to be as successful as any man in the country. You are just forty, and look what you made of yourself with no backing at all. You can do it again."

As he remained silent she resumed.

"Do you know what Captain Prentice told me the other day?"

"What did he tell you?"

"He said that the *Wanderer* could have beaten Fletcher's *Sea Boy* in several of the races sailed this season if you had had the nerve to insist on your rights and not let Fletcher's skipper hog everything. Yes, and you know it's true."

"Maybe it is, and maybe it isn't. Alison, you've said a lot tonight. If I'd known you had this opinion of me—well, I'd have cleared out long ago. I—"

"Jay—" She arose, came to the back of his chair and put her arms about his neck. "Don't talk that way, please."

"I'm sorry; guess I'm a bit upset. But frankly, what do you want me to do, slap Fletcher's face?"

"I'd rather have that than what you have been doing. No, I don't want you to slap his face. But I do want you to take the runabout, go over to his place and talk to him like a man. He will see you; if he won't—make him. If he is out, wait until he comes home."

"It won't do a bit of good."

"It will do me good and it will do you good, anyway. That's the main idea with me, just now. And as you talk to him remember this, your manhood and not your business is the thing that counts. Remember, too, I have six thousand a year we can bum along on, if things go wrong and you have to get going all over again."

"Are you really serious, Alison?"

She gestured and moved toward the house.

"I shall sit up reading until you come back."

Ten minutes later Hapgood brought his car from the garage and stopped in front of his doorway. He caught a glimpse of his wife seated under a reading lamp in the living-room. On tiptoe he made his way to the dining-room; he went to the sideboard, reached for the whisky decanter and poured himself a stiff drink.

The fiery fluid was halfway to his lips when he heard a low laugh. Turning, he saw his wife standing in the doorway.

With a sharp exclamation he flung the glass and its contents to the floor. He strode to the entrance and, without another glance at his wife, passed her and went out of the house.

WARREN FLETCHER returned to his home from the Larchmont Yacht Club, where he had dined and spent the evening, shortly before midnight. He paused to inspect the runabout which stood just beyond the *porte-cochère* and then glancing up to the veranda, he made out Hapgood's figure. His mood happened to be good.

(Continued on page 118)

*Here, for the first
time in fiction, is
being disclosed the
real life of the mo-
tion-picture world
and the curious man-
ners and customs
of its inhabitants*

Souls for Sale

By RUPERT HUGHES

*Illustrated by
Howard Chandler Christy*

The Story So Far:

BEFORE beautiful young Remember Steddon won success as a moving-picture actress, Life had offered her a liberal education in varied emotion. Back in the little Midwest town of her birth she had given her heart to Elwood Farnaby, with whom she sang of Sundays in the choir of her father's church; and because Elwood's drunken father left him the sole support of his mother and the younger children, young Farnaby could not marry her. But for some time, Remember had known there was urgent reason for the marriage.

Remember's anxiety aggravated the cough which of late had worried her parents, so that at length they prevailed upon her to consult Doctor Bretherick concerning it; and the wise old physician soon discovered the true source of her trouble—and persuaded Remember to accept the obvious solution: she must marry Elwood at once. Bretherick had arranged the matter when—Farnaby was brought in dying, after an automobile accident.

Bretherick now ordered the broken-hearted girl West because of that cough, and told her how she was to write her parents successive letters telling of her meeting with an old acquaintance, of her falling in love with him, marrying him—and being left soon a widow. Remember agreed, but she confided in her mother; and that much-tried good woman became her fellow-conspirator.

From Arizona, Remember wrote her parents, telling of her acquaintance with and marriage to a fictitious Mr. Woodville—and later, of his death while on a prospecting trip. At Palm Springs she encountered a moving-picture company, out "on location," and found temporary employment as an extra woman.

After the moving-picture people left, she worked as a domestic on a ranch near by. Wandering up a steep path one day, she fell over a cliff. She recovered—and was told by the physician that her expectations of motherhood would not be realized.

And now her acquaintance with the moving-picture folk led her to Los Angeles, where a group of girls variously employed in the moving-picture industry gave her hospitality. Frantic with a desire for success on the screen, she besought a chance



of Mr. Tirrey, a well-known director; and when he refused her, offered what she had been told was a necessary bribe. Tirrey declined to accept the "bribe" and explained to her how mistaken her idea was. Shortly thereafter Mrs. Steddon, anxious about her daughter, came to California; and now more than ever was it needful for Remember to find work. She made another appeal at the studio, and when she was again refused, wept in despair—and with success. For she was an artistic weeper and as such attracted the attention of Mr. Claymore, a director, and he took her on. It was some time later, when Remember's work with Claymore was finished, that she went driving with him one evening. He made passionate love to her, but the idyl was shattered by a



It was astounding to Remember to find what a change clothes make in a soul The consciousness of her beauty gave a lift of bravado to her carriage.

holdup man who despoiled them at once of their valuables and their romantic mood.

Remember next worked on a film with Tom Holby, in the course of which she distinguished herself by winning a histrionic crying contest from two such competent cinematic weepers as Robina Teele and Miriam Yore. Later Holby saved her life when she was about to stumble into an airplane propeller used to create a mimic storm. He too begged her to marry him, but she refused to compete with the film-public's love for its idol. Besides, she now experienced an interest in the untried field of comedy and comedians; with Holby she went to a preview of a new Chaplin film. (*The story continues in detail.*)

NOTHING could reveal the extreme youth and the swift maturity of the moving pictures like the career of Charles Chaplin. For a few years he was a byword of critical condemnation for his buffoonery, and a proof of the low public taste. Then suddenly he was hailed as one of the master artists of time. It was not he that had improved, or the public. It was the critics who were educated in spite of themselves to the loftiness of buffoonery and the fine genius of Chaplin. The public had loved him from the start.

Yet numberless solemn asses, who were quite as solemn as Charlie but not so profitably or amusingly asinine, were still hee-

hawing the old bray that the moving pictures were not an art but only an industry. Of course it all depended on one's own private definition of the indefinable word *art*, and it was quite overlooked by those who denied the word to the Movia that if it were not an art it was something else quite as well worth while. If it was only an industry, it was a glorious industry. Mark Twain decided that if Shakespeare's plays were not written by Shakespeare, they were written by some one else of the same name. So if the movies are not an art, they are something else quite as artistic.

To Remember Steddon they were her first language for expressing her turbulent self. To her they were philosophy and criticism of life—painting and sculpture given motion and infinite velocity with perfect record. They were many wonderful things to Remember, as to the myriads of bright spirits that had flocked to this new banner, golden calf or brazen serpent as you will. And now Remember, having tasted of the sorrows of the movies, was athirst for the light wine. Clowning at its best is a supernal wisdom, and Chaplin's "The Idle Class" was full of laughter that had an edge—a comment on humanity, a rejoinder if not an answer to the riddles of life and its conduct.

Going to a farce of such a sort is going to a school of the highest educational value. To Remember it was a lesson in life that she sorely needed. She had been taking life and love and art and ambition and sin too, too seriously.

Tom Holby found her already changed when they set out for her home. She had been restlessly unapproachable before the comedy, like a mustang that will not submit to the bridle, will not run far, but will not be taken—that stands and waits with a kindly air, but just as the hand reaches out, whirls and bolts.

But now that she had seen the picture, she was serene. She was genial, amiable. She snuggled close to him in the car, and yet when he spoke tenderly, she made fun of him, giggled, reminded him of bits of the picture that had amused her. This enraged him.

"I'm going in for comedy," she said. "It's the only thing worth while. All this tears-and-passion business makes me sick. People are unhappy enough with troubles of their own. I'd love to have it so that when anybody hears my name, he smiles. Wouldn't it be glorious to have a washerwoman look up from her tub, and say: 'Remember Steddon? Oh, yes, I seen her in a pitcher once, and I laughed till I cried? Wouldn't it be glorious to have the tired business man say to his tired society wife: 'I've got the blues, and so have you. There's one of Remember Steddon's pictures in town; for God's sake let's go see it and have a good laugh? Wouldn't that be a wonderful thing to stand for?'"

Holby made a grunting sound that implied: "I suppose so, if you think so." He added after a silence: "Funny thing, though; more people get relief from a good cry than from a good laugh. If you have tears to shed, as Shakespeare said, and you go laugh your head off at some damfoolishness, you'll find the tears are still there when you get home. But if you see 'Camille' or 'Juliet' or some pathetic thing, if you watch some imaginary person's misery and cry over it, you'll find your own tears are gone."

"That may be true," said Remember; "but all the same, I'd like to take a whack at comedy."

Holby fought out in his soul a very decent battle of self-sacrifice before he brought himself to the height of recommending a rival. "There's Ned Ling; he's looking for a pretty leading woman. He's not Chaplin, but he's awfully funny in his own way, and he's getting a big following. He usually gets engaged to his leading lady—saves money that way, they say. If you're so bent on a comic career, get your agent to go after him."

"Ned Ling," Remember mused. "Yes, I've seen him. He's funny. He might do. I may make a try at him a little later. Just now I feel all tuckered out. I want to get away from the studios, out into the high Sierras. I believe I'll buy a little car and go all by myself."

But when she reached her home, there was something waiting in ambush for her—a letter from her father. And this was not farce.

Chapter Forty-six

"OH, I was wondering if you would ever come!" her mother wailed as Remember came laughing in the door, still laughing at Chaplin's blithe rebuff to maudlin penances. It was odd to be greeted so by the patient little woman who irritated Remember oftenest by her meek patience.

"I was so worried for fear you had had some accident. Why couldn't you have telephoned me?"

"I told you I might be detained at the studio, Mamma, and not to expect me till you saw me," Remember answered, and had not the courage to tell the rest of the truth.

"Oh, I know! I oughtn't to 'a' worried, but I'm a nuisance to myself and to you and to everybody."

There she was again, taking that maddening tone of self-reproach. But Remember simply could not kick her for it. She embraced her and held her tight instead.

"It was all because of a letter I had from your father. If you had come home sooner, I wouldn't have mentioned it to you, maybe! Heaven knows you have trouble enough, and now I'm sorry I spoke. Just forget it."

Then ensued a long battle over the letter, Remember insisting upon reading it, fighting for it as for a cup of poison held out of her reach. And it proved to be a cup of poison when finally she got it from her mother's reluctant fingers.

"DEAR Wife:

"The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away. I have lost you and my darling daughter, and my head is bowed in shame and loneliness, but I still can say: 'Thy will be done.'"

"I think you should know, however, how things are here. Otherwise I should not write you. But I am afraid that you and the daughter that was once ours might tire of the husks of sin and wish to come home repentant."

"Gladly would I run out to meet you and fall upon your necks and slay the fatted calf to make you welcome, for there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth than—but you know the text."

"Lest you should turn home, however, I must warn you that there are only husks here, and no calf at all, fat or lean."

"The money we gave our daughter to seek her health we gave without a regret. And when you went out to seek her and be with her, I regretted only that I could not pay my own fare to go with you."

"Bitterness filled my soul when I learned that she was leading a life of riotous mockery, and when I saw the picture of her smiling in wanton attire at the side of that smirking French general. I had it in my heart to curse her. I wrote in my haste; I repented my hardness of heart and bowed my head in humble shame when I read your angry reply—not so much because I felt that I had been in the wrong as because I had attacked one of your children and so moved your gentle soul to wrath. I had lost your love and your admiration, but that was deserved punishment for the idolatry that had grown up in my heart to-you-wards, and for the mistakes I must have made in not giving our erring daughter a better care."

"And now it has pleased the Lord to pour out the vials of His wrath on my gray hairs. The old mortgage on the church fell due long ago, but foreclosure had been postponed from time to time. We gave a benefit to pay it off, but everybody was too poor to respond, and it did not pay expenses."

"The manager of the motion-picture house here offered to share the profits on the showing of a picture in which, as he had the impudence to tell me, my daughter played a part. But while it would have drawn money for curiosity that would not have responded to a Christian appeal, I felt that it would be a compounding with evil, and I put Satan behind me and ordered the fellow out of the house."

"Then I made a desperate appeal to our banker, and he promised to do what he could for us. But the other day his bank was closed after a run upon it. He had previously mortgaged his house and sold his automobile—the one that killed the poor boy Elwood Farnaby, whom you will remember as one of our choir. The banker was our only wealthy member, and with him failed our last hope. The crops have been poor, and the hard times have affected the local merchants so that pew-rents have not been paid and the usual donations have been withheld."

"There were no conversions at the last communion. Even the baptisms and the weddings that brought me an occasional little fee have been wanting."

"The campaign we made to close the motion-picture houses on Sunday was lost at the last election. We are fallen on evil days."

"What small religious enthusiasm is left in the town has been drawn away to other churches where there are younger ministers with more fashionable creeds and fresher oratory. I have not been spared overhearing carelessly cruel remarks that I was too old to hold the pulpit any longer and should give way to a fresher wind; but I have not known where else to go, as I have had no



"Could you love me just enough and not too much?" he pleaded.

calls from outside. And I could not—God forgive my vanity—I could not believe that I was yet too old to toil in the vineyard of the Lord. I have endured every other loss but that, and now the vineyard is closed.

"The church is to be closed. We had no fire in the stove last Sunday, and almost no worshipers were present. The sexton was ill, and his graceless son refused to leave his bed.

"What I shall do next or how take care of the little children that still cling to our home, the Lord has not yet told me in answer to my prayers. I still have faith that in His good time, He will provide a way or call His servant home, and I hope you will not take this letter as a plea for pity. It is only to explain to you that if you should plan to return to the fold, you will find the fold a ruin. I could not even send you the money for your railroad fare.

"There was a piece in the paper saying that the moving-picture studios were also closing for lack of funds, and I fear that my poor daughter may be turned out of the City of Pleasure in which she elected to spend her life. The rain falleth alike on the just and the unjust.

"My cup is full and running over, but my chief dread is that unhappiness and want may be your portion as well as mine, and that I shall fail you utterly after providing so scantily for you all your days. I can only pray that my fears are the result of loneliness and age and weariness.

"It has not been easy to write this, but it would have been dishonest not to let you know. For months, I used to think every time I heard the train whistle: 'Perhaps, it brings my loved ones home.' For the last few weeks I have feared that it might, lest I should have to welcome you to utter poverty. Even the oil is wanting to keep burning the lamp I used to set in the window every evening.

"And now may the Lord shield you with His ever-present mercy, or at least give us the strength to understand that in all things He knoweth best.

"Your loving husband."

As Remember read this letter and saw back of the lines the heavy brows of her old father, saw the bald spot she had stared at from the choir loft, saw all the sweet wrong-headedness of the veteran

saint, her heart was a wolf in her breast, a wolf that ravened and snarled and hurt intolerably. From her eyes fell streams of those tears that she had sold for a wage. Her face was blubbered and crumpled and soppy as in the crying-contest for points.

Her old-fashioned heartache and eye-shower ended in an old-fashioned hysterics of shrieking laughter, of farcical cynicism at the ridiculous sublimities of life. She startled her mother by crying suddenly: "The Lord is another Charlie Chaplin, Mamma! He's just planted another kick where it will do the most harm."

Chapter Forty-seven

REMEMBER had been debating what make of car to buy. Cars were cheaper in price now, and wonderful bargains were to be had in slightly used cars purchased by hardly used stars who could not complete the payments or keep the gasoline-tanks filled.

She had cried herself into money—not much, but a good deal considering the hard times, the general unemployment and her inexperience.

She had spent little of it. She had no time to shop or even to go down into the streets and stare in at the windows. She had hardly found the time to read the advertisements and study the fashion-plates in the Sunday supplements.

What car to buy and what new house to rent had been amusing conundrums for idle moments of musing. And now those conundrums were solved. When her mother sobbed, "What on earth can I write the poor darling?" Remember replied:

"Of course, the answer is easy. I'm going to send him all the money I've got."

Her mother cried out against this robbing one of her loves to pay another. It seemed a cruel shame to take the first bit of cake from her daughter and sell it to buy bread for her husband.

"You'll need it yourself. You may not have another job soon. You need new clothes and a rest."

"Rest and the clothes can wait."

Her mother kept a miserable silence for a long while before she could say: "Your father will never accept money that you have earned from the pictures. You know him. He'd rather die. He'd rather the whole world would die."

This gave Remember only a brief pause. She answered simply: "Doctor Bretherick got me into this business by making up the pack of lies that brought me out here. Now he can make up a few more and save poor Daddy from desperation."

She sat down at once and wrote the Doctor a letter telling him what he must know already of her father's helplessness, and inclosing a money-order for two hundred and fifty dollars. She wrote a check at first, but she was afraid to have it put through the bank at Calverly lest her father hear of it. She instructed the Doctor to make up another of his scenarios about a repentant member of the congregation wishing to restore some stolen funds—or anything that his imagination could invent.



When Miss Driscoll returned, she said to Mr. Hobbes: "You keep off Miss Steddon; I saw her first." "Nonsense," said Hobbes. "I've been dreaming about her for weeks."

Then Remember set the wheels in motion to secure an immediate engagement with the next to the greatest comedian on the screen, Ned Ling. She discovered in him a man whose private life was almost as solemn as his public life was frantic and foolish, whose personal dignity was as sacred as his professional dignity was degraded, a man of intellectuality, a reader of important books, a debater of art theories—but above all a man afraid of nothing so much as he was afraid of love.

The Bermond company was declaring another holiday, letting out such of its people as were not under contract, farming out such others as it could find places for in the shriveled market. The public was not going to the pictures or to anything else. The exhibitors were losing money or closing down. They refused to pay the rentals necessary to recoup the producers for the outlays required in making pictures under the old scale of wages and salaries. It was a period of dead calm and torpid seas.

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Wise men were trimming sails to the least breeze and jettisoning perilous cargo. The too courageous ones were sinking, vanishing, blowing up, dying of famine.

When Remember spoke to Bermond of her desire to play a comedy with Ned Ling, Bermond leaped at the idea. It would take her off his salary-list for weeks, and it would help her fame. He was not altogether selfish. He arranged a dinner under the pretext of a private preview of Tom Holby's new picture. It was not yet in its final shape, but the producers were glad to lend it to Bermond.

Bermond warned Remember to wear her best clothes. There was a certain shame in her heart at baiting such a trap, but she felt now that she had a higher purpose than her personal ambition. She was working for her father and his church as well. Religious motive has always been a wondrous sedative to a conscience.

Bermond saved her the price of a gown by lending her a flashing Parisian miracle from his own big wardrobe. It was astounding to him as it was to Remember, to find what a change clothes make in a soul. The simple things she had worn hitherto had given her a simple modesty. She was forever pulling her skirts down. Her muscles remembered when her mind forgot. Kendrick had yelled to her once: "In God's name, Miss Steddon, forget your knees and don't draw attention to them by always reaching for them."

When she saw herself before her mirror in the Paris gown, she recoiled in red horror. A tide of blood swept under her entire skin. Her bosom was bared in a great moony sweep; there were no straps at all across the shoulders, and her back was revealed to the waist. She had never known how beautiful it was until she stood before her mirror and looked slantwise across her shoulder at the creamy charm of the gently rippling plane.

She rose to the challenge of opportunity and clothed herself in audacity. The consciousness of her beauty gave a lilt of bravado to her carriage. She was happy in herself and silenced her old modesties with a pious thought that the Lord never gave her such flesh for concealment. Her mother was pale with terror of the white swan this pretty duckling had grown to, but she let her sail away.

The unsuspecting Ned Ling came to the dinner and never dreamed that Remember was there to play the *Lorelei*. She shuddered at her own coquetry, but it was art for art's sake and in heaven's name besides.

She met the comedian with a mixed attitude of homage and of self-confidence. She made him proud, and she made him happy. Best of all, she put him at his best. He said witty things, and her laughter was a final allurements.

After the dinner they sank into big chairs in the Bermonds' living-room to watch the new picture. From a table behind them a little domestic projection-machine sent a cone of light across their heads to a small curtain. And there a Lilliputian twin of Remember wept

and fought and won through a tiny drama.

From the dark, the happy gloom, Ned Ling kept crying out his enthusiasms for Remember's skill. He was frank enough in criticism of the picture as a structure. He groaned at the comic relief, and he shouted in ridicule of the hackneyed situations. Bermond echoed his praise and his censure. The picture was not a Bermond creation, but Remember was.

In an interlude during a change of reels, Ned Ling said with all the earnestness of an earnest clown: "I love your tears, Miss Steddon; they make me weep. See how wet my eyes are!"

He leaned close and made her look into his melancholy orbs. Their melancholy was their fortune, for in his pictures he never smiled except when he was in a plight of comic despair.

"I love to weep," he went on shamelessly. "Last Christmas—how do you suppose I spent my last Christmas? I stayed at

home alone and felt sorry for myself. I did! Honestly! I just wallowed in self-pity. I sat for an hour before a mirror and watched the tears pour down my cheeks. And when they fell into my sobbing mouth, I drank them, and loved them because they were so bitter. It was the happiest Christmas I ever spent. Next Christmas let's you and me sit together before a mirror and have a glorious cry, a weeping duet! I can't imagine anyone else who would make me weep as lusciously as you. Will you come?"

"I'll be there," said Remember, half with pity and half with scorn.

Thereupon, as the lights went out again, he laid his hand on hers where it rested on the arm of her chair. When she moved it, he clutched it eagerly and whispered, "Oh, please!" and clung to it like a lonely child.

He laughed aloud at the wonderful battle Tom Holby put up, but he cheered Remember's every scene as she dashed through the storm.

"How brave! How beautiful you are!" he murmured, leaning close. She whispered to him the tale of how near she was to death in the scene when she thrust her way through the tree. And now he clung to her with both hands as if he would save her thus belatedly from danger.

"I was very near to death in my last picture," he said. "I was supposed to sit down on a plumber's torch. I had on asbestos trousers, but somehow my coat-tails caught fire, and I should have burned to death if Miss Clave hadn't thrown a rug around me. Awfully nice girl! I could have gone on loving her, but she kept talking about marriage, and I was afraid she'd get me to the altar some day. God knows, I'm afraid of marriage, aren't you? It sickened me when I heard the audience scream with laughter at the scene. We kept it in as it was, and gave it a funny title. It had just the touch of obscenity that everybody loves. Too bad we Americans make such a bane of obscenity—a little wholesome smut never hurt anybody."

When the picture was finished, he told Bermond what a genius he had in Miss Steddon and said he wished he had her himself. Bermond adroitly forced the card on his hand, and before Ned Ling quite knew it, it had been arranged that Remember should be lent to him at a figure far above her Bermond salary.

"I stuck him for the extra money," Bermond laughed afterward, "but I love to make Ned Ling pay—it hurts him so! I'll split the bonus with you, my dear."

Chapter Forty-eight

TOM HOLBY called on Remember the following evening. He had so earnest a face, so longing a manner, that she had not the heart to tell him at once of her triumph over Ned Ling and her engagement to play the leading rôle in his next farce.

But Holby seemed to realize that something had happened to take her a little farther out of his parish. There was a fugaciousness in her manner, an independence of him that terrified him.

He grew as flat-footedly direct and simple as one of the big, bluff "he-men" he so often played. He actually twirled his hat, running his fingers round and round the brim as he did when he was a cowboy making love to a gal from down East. He was as sheepish as Will Rogers playing *Romeo*, but not so shriekingly funny.

His very boorishness pleaded for him, and if Remember had been free of this new hunger of hers for a taste of comedy, she might have taken pity on him lovingly. But she was in a mood of deferment at least, and her smiling, teasing manner baffled him. In his confusion he noted a bundle of letters in his pocket, and for lack of other topic pulled them out.

"This is a pack of letters that came to the studio just as I was leaving," he explained. "I stuffed 'em in my pocket. Haven't had a chance to look them over. Mostly mash-notes, I guess."

He took out the lot and riffled them over like a pack of cards.

"If they think we movie people are fools, what have they got to say of the public that deluges us with this stuff? Here's one; let's see what it's like." He read from a "letter of passionate script:

"Dear Mr. Holby:

"If I could only tell you how much I admire you, you would be the proudest man on earth. There's a picture of you on my

bureau now, but it's only a clipping from a Sunday supplement. I take it out only when the door is locked. Mamma would skin me if she knew I had it. I turn it away when I dress, but oh, I do just admire you so much. If I could only have a real photo of you to kiss good night, how proud I'd be. Wont you please send me one—with your own really truly autograph on it? You are my favorite of all actors, so manly, and virile and handsome. Oh, I just—"

HOLBY shook his head and stuffed it back in its envelope. "Will she get the photograph?" asked Remember with the scorn of one woman for another.

"Oh, yes. We can't afford to antagonize a single fan. My secretary will send her a picture, and autograph it for me."

"Who is your secretary—a girl?"

Holby slid a glance of eager query under his eyelids. He hoped that there was a tinge of jealousy in her heart. That would be vastly encouraging. But her eyes revealed contempt only, for men and the parasitesses that haunt them.

"No, he's a man," said Tom dolefully. "Combination of press-agent, valet, dresser and secretary."

The next letter had a Philippine Islands postmark. It was from a man in Cebu. It said:

"Dear Friend:

"Kindly please send me a copy of your sympathy portrait. Hoping to received it your benevolent reply. Many thanks for my best wishes."

He read a few more and saw that they were boring Remember. He put them back into his pocket.

"Brave man!" she said. "You open your mail in the presence of the woman you—you—"

"I love and expect to marry," he said, gripping her hand. It was a grip of authority. It was a Cupid the Constable, so different from the pathetic clutch of Ned Ling the clown-child.

Just now it was Remember's humor to control somebody. She did not oppose Holby's clutch or resent it. She followed the most loathsome and exasperating of all policies, nonresistance.

"You're not going to marry me, Tommy," she said. "I don't want to be one of Solomon's wives."

"Solomon's wives?"

"Yes; you're wedded already to an army of fans. Half the women in the United States seem to claim you as their spiritual bridegroom. I'd as soon marry a telephone-booth or a census-report. You make Brigham Young look like a confirmed bachelor; he had only forty wives or so; you have a million."

"They make me tired," he growled.

"Maybe; but what wouldn't they do to me? I'd get poisoned candy or infernal machines in the mail. I'd never dare marry you. It would be committing suicide."

She was not altogether without seriousness; she felt a primeval jealousy, a primeval sense of monopoly. She writhed at the thought of possessing only a minute fraction of a universal husband, a syndicated consort whose portrait on a thousand bureaus inspired numberless strange women with an ardor they called artistic admiration.

Remember turned green at the thought of a husband whose real lips she must share with actresses on the scene, and whose pictured lips would be kissed good night all around the world. It was a monstrous, fantastic jealousy, but its foundation was real. She shuddered at the prospect of being embraced by a husband whose virility thrilled a multitude of anonymous maenads. If all these idiots wrote, how many must there be who worshiped in silence?

But she did not express this revulsion to Tom Holby. She did not really feel enough desire for him just now to be jealous, except with a prophetic remoteness. Just now she was curious about another type of soul, about a comic sprite.

She felt sure that no women wrote Ned Ling love-letters or set him up as an *eikon* on a bureau. Ned Ling's pictures were not sifting around the globe setting fool girls aglow, for Ned Ling's published portraits were always grotesque. He was photographed with a caricatured face of white chalk and a charcoal grimace, with a nonsensical hat and collar becoming almost as familiar now as Charlie Chaplin's neat slovenliness, his mustaches and his splayfoot shoes.

Surely Ned Ling was free from the amorous bombardment of anonymous love-letters. A woman might stand a chance of keeping his heart for her very self, and it would be cheerful to have one's own comedian on the hearth. (Continued on page 126)

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Illustrated by
J. D. Gleason

*A spirited drama of the
fire-fighters, by a man
who knows them well*

The Man Smith

By O. F. LEWIS

IN THE night there was a fire. On the following morning, all there was about it in the newspaper list of fires for the preceding twenty-four hours was this: "2:35 A. M. 317 Sullivan Street. A. Gavitz. Damage not given."

Among the people of the neighborhood there was no excitement. The engines went by, and they went back to sleep. It wasn't in *their* house. To the newspaper men at Police Headquarters, there was no story in it—just a cellar-and-hallway fire.

To the fire companies responding to the box, it was a two-alarm fire that was going good for about twenty minutes, and had all companies working; that was all.

But to Bill Smith, probationary fireman of Two Engine, it meant a career, and *that's* the story. . . .

On that evening, long after midnight, William Smith, probationary fireman, and for less than six hours a member of the Department, lay wide-eyed in his narrow bed in the darkened dormitory of Two Engine. Around him, in seven other beds, other men slept, some of them noisily. Bill Smith's own nerves

strained as he waited for that bell on the wall to hit. His duty then would be immediate. He must be one of the first to get to the brass pole, slide down it and hit the cement floor of the fire house.

Never mind what station came in on the bell! Out of his bed like a flash and into his trousers and rubber boots, standing ready like a half-collapsed accordion beside his bed! No words, no lost motions—just down the pole! If he then saw the other men of the company climb upon the sides and back of the big red hose-wagon, Bill would spring to the place already assigned to him on the back. He would grab his helmet off the layers of hose, and then his rubber coat; and as Two Engine pulled out of the door, he would be getting into his coat. Or if she didn't roll, on that box, then back to bed, of course—until the next station hit.

Bill Smith didn't expect to sleep much that first night. He had a lot to think about. The rules of the Department, for instance. A fireman must hit the floor in time to go out of the

door with his company! If he doesn't, there are charges preferred against him at Headquarters. Bad business for a probationary fireman!

Then there was another Department rule—the first rule of all, in fact. Obey all orders of your superior officer! Go where you're sent, any time, anywhere—no questions, no side-stepping, no excuses! The only way to fight fire is to put it out! That much his captain, a tall, gray-haired, wiry, young-faced man named Winters, had said to him this first evening, as he looked Bill over appraisingly:

"Son, you'll be a long time learning the business of fire-fighting! But the less you talk, the more time you'll have to see and hear things. Every man in the Department has a good chance to rise. Every captain, every battalion chief, every deputy chief and even the big chief himself were firemen at first—just like you! Remember this, too! Neither I nor my lieutenant will ever order you into any place at a fire unless we're there with you to show you the way!"

Bill Smith, lying open-eyed in the dark, felt a warm thrill for his captain already. Then Captain Winters had gone on:

"But Smith, a real fireman not only obeys orders and follows his superior officer anywhere, but he'll risk his life and even give it at any time for another person in danger of death! If you don't feel that, you'll never be a real fireman! If we in the Department didn't know that was true, this town would burn down, and the Department would go to pieces! Do you get me, son? All right! That's all!"

Bill Smith, from his bed in the darkened dormitory, turned his eyes now toward a door at the end of the room, through the frosted glass of which a dim light showed. Beyond that door was the headquarters of Battalion Chief Egan. Downstairs, snuggling up to the red engine, was the Chief's red car. Already, this first evening, a big fireman named Whalen had said to Bill Smith, who was only of average height, and slender:

"Say, kid, what's the idea, your gettin' into this house with Chief Egan? Tryin' to get his job?" Bill had only flushed. He had never said much to anyone, and hadn't a ready rejoinder to the kidding. But when Chief Egan had been Captain Egan, over with Seven Truck, and Bill had been a newsboy and a waif, he'd hung around the door of Seven Truck, to see the old hook and ladder go out with the horses. And Captain Egan had been a mighty hero to him—and kind, too, for once he had taken him and another ragged boy all over the fire-house, and had explained to him every detail of the hook and ladder. That had been one of the proudest hours in the kid's life. And tonight he was sleeping on the same floor with Chief Egan!

Rain swirled against the windows of the fire-house in squally gusts. The glow in Bill's heart died out, and apprehension took its place. He hoped there'd be no fire tonight. When the test came, he wanted the best possible chance to make good—not in the biting cold of a November night, in a downpour of icy rain, and with a wind that would mean perhaps a bad fire!

Any minute now he'd have to make good! Just one ring on the bell, and then—

Over him swept the feeling that he'd had ever since he was a boy—the conviction of his own worthlessness, after all! He'd read that soldiers were afraid before going into battle. Well, wasn't a man who was going to fight fire going into battle? Yet these men in the dormitory were sleeping and snoring! What if they knew he was worrying!

What if they knew he'd never had a father or a mother that he'd ever seen or known, and that he'd been called "gutter-born?"



"Down!" he heard a voice call, muffled, in front of him.

What if they knew that an old Dutchman had kept him alive merely in order to have a kid on hand to run for his beer? What if the men in this company knew that a bartender had used him for two years as a bottle-runner, and given him only free lunches in pay, and had beaten him up again and again? Tonight they'd told him downstairs that Whalen, asleep over close by the door, was the coming light heavyweight of the country, and that from the time he was ten he'd licked every kid in the neighborhood.

Bill saw himself in contrast. At a grocery where he'd worked for two years—between twelve and fourteen—for two dollars a week, he'd slept on the counter and had been the butt of every joke and joker. His head was large; his legs were like pipe-stems; and his voice was high. He couldn't think of things in time to reply effectively to his tormentors. His school experiences were intermittent, but one story told in the classroom by a teacher stuck in his mind—that in a country called Sparta the boys would hold live foxes under their coats and let the foxes tear their flesh open and hurt them terribly rather than tell about something or other. After that, whenever the bartender beat him up, Bill would remember the foxes.

Brought into the children's court for smashing a window and resisting an officer whom he kicked in the shins, he was turned over to a rotund, smiling man called a probation officer. "Well,

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He saw the back of big Whalen disappear in the swirling smoke.

son, what do you want to be in life? We might as well get you started right now!" the smiling man had asked.

Bill's reply was slow in coming. "I want to be a—a man!"

The probation officer contemplatively regarded the stripling with the big head. He saw the thin wrists and the pipestem legs. He knew Bill was a waif.

"Well, Bill, you can do it!" he said. "Heard of Napoleon? Napoleon was about the smallest man ever, but look what he got away with!"

The probation officer made Bill quit a local gang that hung out on a corner and whose members hoped some day to become dips and prizefighters. That put him in bad with the gang, and most of them took turns at beating him up. So Bill went off to another quarter of the city, and took to swimming and running. He felt that he'd got to be a lot stronger, to be a man.

He went to night-school for two years, because to be a man a fellow had to have an education. Through the succeeding years he made a nondescript living, now as a newsboy unable to hold good stands on street-corners because bigger or huskier boys drove him off, now carrying telegrams, now helping a drunken local expressman, now trying longshoring, only to find the cases too heavy to lift—and finally landing, when he was twenty-one, never having known a mother, a home, brothers or sisters, or

any close and helpful friendship, or the sensation of possessing property of any value, in a cheap lunchroom as dishwasher. The only thing he had escaped on the road to maturity was the reform school.

And through all the years, he had carried in his heart the memory of one man—the sort of man he'd like to be—Captain Egan, who'd taken him around the house of Seven Truck as though he amounted to something, and had told him fire stories. And it was in this cheap lunchroom that Bill Smith finally found the start of the right road.

One evening a flare burst out from behind the range that swept not only out into the room, but behind the partitions and rapidly up into the floor above. The stampede of kitchen "help" tipped over, on the range, a kettle of fat in which potatoes were being fried. The room was instantly ablaze.

Bill Smith, caught in this emergency, was buffeted by the rushing employees in the kitchen, and in a moment by the firemen who seemed to fill the place. In the stifling smoke that held Bill half hypnotized as it rolled out from behind the range, he found himself crowded into a corner of the kitchen, and then forcibly pushed out into the lunchroom by the firemen.

There he stood in the outer restaurant, wearing a dirty apron, his sleeves rolled up, staring at the (Continued on page 160)



The author of this story is one of America's most distinguished writers of fiction. Here he is amusingly concerned with psychoanalysis, with a love-affair and with a butler who was perfect until the soup slipped.

Inhibiting Wattles

By MAXWELL
STRUTHERS
BURT

Illustrated by
Frederick R. Gruger

THAT, indeed, was what first occurred to me—the mystery of it. Why, after so many flawless years? No one seemed to know when it had begun. No one ever does. It is a characteristic of catastrophe: unexpectedness—not inherent, but due to the optimism of the human mind. We picnic under a dam until it breaks and drowns us; we refuse to admit that rats are ever members of our household until they bite us and

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Mr. Valentine's patience boiled over. He described Vera as an "outrageous and impertinent child! A serpent!"

give us the plague. All of which leads to the fact that, in my opinion at least, the Valentines were unduly astonished when, on that January night, Wattles dropped the soup on Mr. Valentine's head.

I had suspected that some day he would. As an intimate friend of the family, I have the clear eye of intimacy, and as a wine-merchant by profession—until recently—there is accruing to me an additional advantage where the odor of sherry is concerned. Before the final disaster there had been two occasions, if not more, when my own suspicions had been acutely aroused. A fine blowing November afternoon, for instance, when Wattles, opening the front door, had fixed me with the direct but wild

eye of a poet, and had seemed to regard his doubt as to whether Mrs. Valentine was in or not as a malevolently subtle joke; and another time when, upon my coming to dine, helping me off with my coat, he had hiccuped gently in my ear. Now, it does not, of course, do to be too particular, and innocent hiccuping is a physiological unpreventability that may burst forth in the most distinguished of circles; but somehow one does not look for it from the Wattleses of the world. It would seem on their part a professional nicety to refrain even at the risk of serious danger to themselves—all professions have their dangers; and besides, this particular hiccup was not innocent in the least. About Wattles lingered the heavy aroma of Amontillado.

Temporarily infinite disturbance had beset me. Added to my worry concerning the future peace of the Valentine family were more fundamental, more philosophical considerations. It was very much like the first time I saw my niece, a modern debutante, at a ball. There seemed—that is, if you understand me at all—in a reeling world, entirely too much of some things and entirely too little of others—an unjust disproportion that balked common sense. I am confused, but that is the way I felt—both about Wattles and my niece. The former had been one of the few remaining rocks to which it was possible to cling in the mounting waters of change, a sole argument left when others insisted, as they frequently did, that outside of the movies perfect service no longer existed. You know how, about the end of the first reel, when the widowed heroine is forced to leave her home in Surrey, the gray-haired butler, who has been with her almost two weeks, comes out and tearfully kisses her hand on the Hispano-Pasadenan ancestral steps? Well, that was Wattles. Only, he had been with the Valentines not two weeks but twenty years, and short of hand-kissing, a gesture he would have considered unbearably Latin, reality with him was better than the best of acting.

After the soup fell, there was a little pause.

From the fireplace, where soft-coal crackled cheerily, a warm radiance filtered out into the room, unlit otherwise save by the candles on the table. To those who knew no better, it might have seemed that here was an island of peace in a world that outside rocked with storm; an island (if this is not mixing metaphors) still, heavily curtained, pleasantly redolent of excellent food, and of roses in the centerpiece, and, I think, some sort of young-girl perfume Vera Valentine was using.

This was not so; it was not peaceful.

In the pause Mr. Valentine's white shirt-front swelled twice visibly. Color concentrated beneath his pale blue eyes and overlapped into the conservative frame of close-cropped side-whiskers. The soup absorbed itself in the blackness of his dinner-coat, save for one amber trickle that ran from the middle of his head to a point above his right eyebrow. This he suffered with a fanatic's rapt joy in stigmata. Behind him Wattles, empty-handed but with arms still extended in the gesture of presentation, tactfully gazed at a point fifteen feet distant on the wall.

It was Vera Valentine, in her fresh, sweet, disinterested young voice, who broke the silence. "Well," she asked, "aren't you going to say something? Wattles expects it."

Mr. Valentine recalled himself slowly to life. "Yes!" he answered thoughtfully. "Yes!" He wiped the soup from his forehead. "You bet I am!" he remarked forcibly, as if to himself.

"Homer!" Mrs. Valentine spoke sharply from the other end of the table.

Mr. Valentine struggled to his feet. He flung down his napkin. He began to stammer. "I'll be damned!" he said, his face suffused with passion. "I'll be double dam—"

"Homer!"

Mr. Valentine sank back into his chair.

Vera's accents were regretful. "I don't know why it is," she objected, "you always interrupt him just as he's going to be dramatic."

The jeweled pin in Mrs. Valentine's hair trembled. She fixed Wattles with a devastating

glance. "Leave the room!" she commanded. "And send John here! Do not let me see you again until tomorrow morning!"

Wattles tacked softly towards the screen that hid the exit to the pantry. Halfway to it, Mrs. Valentine stopped him.

"Wattles!"

"Madam?"

"Take a cold bath."

The swing-door opened and shut softly.

"Fascinating!" murmured Vera.

Her mother regarded her stonily. "In my day," she observed, "nothing fascinating would have been found in soup being spilled on a father's head."

It was the end of a little incident as devastating, in its way, as the fall of Bismarck.

Mrs. Valentine breathed deeply through her high patrician nose. She smiled courageously. "And now, my dear Alec," she said, "we can no longer spoil your dinner; we shall—we must—discuss something cheerful." We discussed the impending panic.

On the whole it was not a cheerful meal. The shadow of Wattles obtruded itself like a skull at a feast. Temporarily the thought of possible bread-lines and unemployment heartened Mr. Valentine considerably, but despite the gallant volubility of Mrs. Valentine and Vera,—the latter's tinged with the slightly insulting manner she uses toward myself and all other men over forty, as if age were some sort of deliberate mental absurdity on our part,—he slipped back all too readily into the sullen and cryptic mood that had distinguished him since the accident. One felt that he was saying to himself: "Soup! Sixty-five years old, and one of the biggest bankers in New York; and then—soup! On the head!" He ate nuts passionately.

I am sure I don't know where we would have got to after dinner if it hadn't been for the entrance of young Griswold Valentine.

Young Griswold restored things to a more normal level. That is his way. His object in life seems to be to restore things to a more normal level. Before his clear blue eyes both tragedy and broad comedy slink upstairs to change their theatrical costumes. Loud laughter in his presence is like taking off one's collar and mopping one's face with a disordered handkerchief. A level-browed, rather irritating amusement seems to be the proper attitude. We were sitting about the fire in the library on the second floor, our appearance one of dreary consultation. Mrs. Valentine, I think, was on the point of rebuking me.

"I wish," she was saying, "you had told us before about your suspicions concerning Wattles. To know that—er—it is customary—"

Her husband lifted an antagonistic eyebrow. "The whole point to me," he said, "is that he should have taken to drink at the very moment when I, after due thought, and feeling it incumbent upon me as an American citizen, and—erum—I might add, a leader of thought in a small way—"

"Politics!" murmured Vera.

"And—erum—I might add, a leader of thought in a small way, to abolish all strong liquor from my household—have decided, as it were. The arrows of Fate—"

Vera sat up suddenly and interrupted her father in a manner that could only have been habitual. She continued, however, to stare at the fire, as if a new and striking thought had occurred to her. "That's just it!" she said in an awestricken whisper. "Of course! How simple it is when you know!"

Vera's father regarded her with a bilious eye. She merely smiled dreamily.



On the sixteenth day Mr. Beers had been able to isolate Wattles' dreams.

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It was easy to look over them without being seen Wattles was raising a glass of wine to his lips.

It was at this moment that Griswold Valentine entered. He was very smart; there was a flower in his coat-lapel—he wore a flower because nobody else at the moment did; and his smooth cheeks—freshly laundered, one might almost say—were crisp from the wind that had whipped them. He never dined at home, even on his off-nights, particularly since his father had reached the momentous decision to which he had been referring.

Griswold looked at us quizzically. "Funeral?" he inquired politely.

"No," said Vera, "coffee!"

He flicked her with his eyes. "I saw a girl this afternoon," he remarked to the family at large, "who looked just like Vera, if Vera would only take a little more trouble—charming! Met her at tea." He came forward and stood with his back to the burning logs. "Well, what's the matter?"

"Your father—" began Mrs. Valentine.

"Ruined?"

Vera collapsed into a heap of silvery giggles. "Soup!" she gasped. "Wattles—all over Father!"

A slow look of horror, unlike anything I had ever seen before,

rested for a moment upon Griswold's face. "Wattles?" he ejaculated. Then he recovered himself.

Mr. Valentine's simmering patience boiled over. He arose from his chair and with a dignified but trembling hand pointed at his daughter. His attitude was that of a president addressing a board of recalcitrant directors. One felt that he intended to speak at length. He did. He began slowly, gathering impetus as he proceeded. He described Vera as an "outrageous and impertinent child! A serpent!" He hated to use the word, but it was true. "Serpent! . . . No, don't interrupt me, Katherine! I repeat. . . . Bosom—I mean, serpent! Cherished in the bosom! Twenty years—bosom!"

Mr. Valentine then reviewed his relationship with Wattles from the beginning, from the time, twenty years before, almost on the very day Vera was born (at this point there was a tremolo note and a sidelong glance at Vera), Wattles had entered his service—"a mere boy" (of forty) untrained except for his earlier life with the Earl of Carminty.

Who had made Wattles? Why, he, Homer Valentine! Who had treated him, well, like a brother—a younger brother? Who had encouraged him to talk at breakfast, tell all his little troubles—when no one else was around? Why, he, Homer Valentine! And damned boring it had been, too! And now here, at the end of twenty years, was Wattles deliberately spilling soup upon him. Deliberately! He chose his words carefully. Intoxicated? What difference did that make? Was a man excused from crime because of inebriety? No! A thousand times no! All Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence rocked at such a thought. But (here Mr. Valentine paused and then spoke more slowly) far, far worse—this was the thing that really hurt—was the way his own family had chosen to treat the incident. That was the point! That was the wound! To say that he was shocked would be putting it mildly. They had turned upon him—upon a kind husband and generous father. They had taken the side of a drunken butler. He did not wish to be too severe, but somehow he felt that was the sort of thing that was never forgotten. He would try—he would try to forget. Now he was going out; he would go away; he would go to his club.

HE sat down heavily in his chair, greatly relieved and in a much better frame of mind.

Griswold applauded softly. "Splendid!" he said. "Excellent!" He turned to his mother. "The trouble with Father," he continued, "is that, since his public utterances on the subject forced him to go in for Prohibition himself, he gets perfectly furious if anyone else catches up with a drink. Jealousy is what I believe it is. I've noticed it often after I've been dining out. But now"—his face became thoughtful—"let's get down to business. To begin with, let's rid ourselves of unessentials. Personally, I don't see why Wattles shouldn't take a drink every now and then when he wants it. That's the initial premise. It doesn't seem fair, with all the rest of the world getting drunk—"

His mother interrupted him. "Do I—" she began hoarsely. Griswold was tolerant. "Oh, no!" he continued. "I was merely speaking broadly."

"Extremely!" commented Mrs. Valentine with tight lips.

Griswold smiled. "I didn't mean you or Vera," he explained. He turned a cold eye upon Vera. "Although I don't know anything about Vera. Lately I've been planning a long talk with Vera. I've noticed several young women— However, what I mean, d'you see, is this: We can't expect Wattles not to take an occasional drink in his old age, can we? That's reasonable—although I do think he might offer to share it with Father. But the point is, we might ask him to do it out of office-hours, as it were. Even at family parties, we can't have him spilling things all over the table. Now, if we could get him to promise—"

"Fire him!" boomed Mr. Valentine.

Griswold was shiningly patient. "Don't be absurd!" he admonished. "Wattles isn't just the president of a trust company, or something like that. You can't replace him in a minute. They don't make his kind any more. How the deuce would any of us know what we were doing without Wattles? Be reasonable. Discussion is the only solution. And if that won't work, why then, we'll simply have to turn the dining-room over to him and eat up here. You might just as well talk of firing Mother."

"It has entirely to do," said Vera, still staring at the fire, her chin in her hand, as if she had heard nothing whatsoever of the previous conversation, "with some hidden mysterious cause—some complex, some—some childish wound." One became aware

again of the truth that Vera read enormously, although she concealed the fact with extraordinary ingenuity.

AT this moment John, the second-man, emerged from the floor below. A grim look settled upon the faces of the Valentine family. John was by nature awkward. He had been in the army four years, and it had apparently affected his memory. Now we were given vaguely to understand that a "Mr. Stevens" was calling upon Miss Valentine. There was no doubt whatever that John's entrance had much to do with the final determination to preserve Wattles at all costs. There was an appalling difference between his six-feet-two of shambling inefficiency, and the gray-haired, alert gracefulness of Wattles.

Vera arose regretfully. "Oh, dear!" she complained. "Just when we were getting to be so interesting! Tell him I'll be right down."

This was Vera's predominant love-affair. I had seen young Mr. Stevens; he was very blond and used some wonderful depressant on his hair so that it stayed down under the most exciting circumstances. He was very rich.

Griswold obtruded his personality unpleasantly. "Look here," he said, "aren't you ever going to get engaged to that fellow? Evening calls, and all that sort of thing!"

Vera's long, gray, expressive eyes showed a cold obstinacy. She ignored her brother's remark completely.

"Because," continued Griswold amicably, "if you don't, you'll lose him. These modern friendships, with marriage ten years or so off, are all very well, but they won't work. You mark my words—you and all your little girl friends are going to learn something."

"I hate marriage!" breathed Vera fervently.

She paused in the doorway, peering at us from under her fashionably tousled hair like a charming ermine under a haystack.

"I have it!" she said suddenly.

Her mother jumped. "What?"

"Wattles!" Vera became sibylline once more. "I'm going to ask Mr. Beers," she concluded.

The cigarette in Griswold's mouth expressed astonishment.

"Beers?"

"Yes, Beers."

"Who in the world is Beers?"

Vera's eyes grew reminiscent. "George Aurelius Beers," she explained. "I met him two weeks ago—he asked me to marry him."

"But—" began Mr. Valentine. "But—but good Lord!"

"I'm not going to," explained Vera calmly. "I don't like his profession—he's a psychanalyst. But he's very interesting. He is the one man to go to under the circumstances." She reflected. "I may ask him to come and live with us a while," she proceeded. "He's just starting, so he hasn't much to do as yet."

"You will—you will—you will not!" decided her father in an awe-stricken but firm whisper, as if he was saying a little piece he had learned by heart.

"Oh, yes, I will!" retorted Vera placidly. "You'll come to it sooner or later. Everyone does—nowadays." She hesitated, and then with the air of dreamy divination again descending upon her: "In a little while you'll beg me to," she announced. She floated away in the direction of the youthful Mr. Stevens.

THEY did. They came to it speedily. But in the meantime several things happened. They naturally would. The result was a pitiful comment upon the abyss that lies between human intention and accomplishment.

One gathered that Wattles had been spoken to, collectively and individually, and from several different points of view. Family pride had been appealed to, manliness, length of service, the future, and even the memory of Grandfather Valentine, who had been dead fifteen years. In all crises some one or other always went back to Grandfather Valentine. He brooded over the destinies of the family like an apple-cheeked angel, whose wicked but carefully guarded life had apparently only added to his reputation for wisdom. Upon the mention of this cherished ancestor's name, Wattles had looked startled, but was reported to have murmured something touching and respectful.

Specifically: Mrs. Valentine and Wattles wept together—in a corner of the library. There was talk between them of gray hairs bowed in sorrow to the grave. There would be. Beneath her magnificent exterior of worldliness, fundamentally Mrs. Valentine was still an American woman; in other words, she was tender-hearted and religious. Once or twice, of course, Griswold, in a manner carefully uncon- (Continued on page 102)

Drifters

By COURTNEY RYLEY COOPER



Illustrated by
J. Allen St. John

You've never read a more thrilling yet heart-searching story than this of a man, a child—and a lion

IN the rear of the old Schwartzmeier Butcher-shop was a tumbledown, rickety shed which in the days before automobiles had housed the horse and delivery-cart of a neighborhood market. Long disuse had allowed its roof to open and warped its wooden walls; nor had the grumpy Schwartzmeier, when at last a renter appeared, deemed it at all necessary to make repairs. Last year's cobwebs still hung in the shadowy corners; faint streaks of light penetrated the chinks of the almost useless roof; about the clap-boarded sides the chill of an early spring wind found more than a score of holes through which it might creep in upon the two creatures who but recently had come to inhabit its dim, grimy interior—one a beast that shivered and roared in grumbling protest as it paced its narrow cage; the other a short, prematurely gray man with a fussy, overanxious mien, whose eyes sometimes belied the upward curve of his lips, a stubby, chub-faced little person who now and then seemed to forget the beast in his charge as he stood for a moment staring—at nothing.

It was out of such an abstraction that he pulled himself, late one afternoon, and with something of anticipatory anxiety moved a step nearer the streak of light which edged the sagging door. Some one was stumbling along the littered passageway at the side of the market. A moment later a bulbous, derby-hatted figure swung back the door and uncertainly thrust a foot within. "Anybody here?" was the grumbling inquiry, in answer to which the little man came quickly forward.

"Oh, yes! Come right in! It's a bit dark in here, aint it? But you'll be all right in a minute, just as soon as your eyes get

used to it. I was going to string up a light from the butcher-shop, but I thought—"

"Uh-huh!" The man in the derby stood staring about him, one fat hand toying with a tiger-claw watch-charm heavily bossed with gold. "Uh-huh! Yeh—helluva place to look at anything in. You're Cap' Pennington, aint you?"

"Yes sir—Captain Pennington himself, sir. You've answered my advertisement?"

"Uh-huh!" The fat man stuffed a fat cigar between his fat lips and squinted toward the shadowy cage in the corner. "Blain's my name."

"Not the Mr. Blain of the Blain's World's Greatest?"

"Yeh. Wotcha got? Lion?"

"Of course, Mr. Blain! Certainly! I couldn't see your face—the light, you know. Yes sir, it's a lion—full-maned black Nubian, well trained, gentle as a dog, sir, and I can do anything in the world with him. If you don't mind giving me a lift, sir, we can shunt the cage over a little nearer the door."

As he crossed the brighter area of the entrance, the fat hand of the famous Mr. Blain, with its big cigar, halted suddenly on its route to the lips. His gaze centered. Then, quietly:

"What'd you change your name for, Patterson?"

The smaller man whirled. The eyes lost their lonely expression in one of frightened amazement. The high color of the cheeks departed quickly, then slowly returned. Chubby fingers twisted as hands clasped. At last:

"I figured I'd changed, Mr. Blain. My hair's turned, for one thing. Then I've got a good deal older-looking and lost a lot of weight. I used to be sort of fattish—before it happened."

"That don't explain nothing. Why don't you want people to know you?"

"Me?" A slight flash came into the tired eyes. "I—I just figured that people might not want me under my right name. I—"

"Uh-huh!" Then came a pause while the fat Blain puffed thoughtfully at the fat cigar. "Somebody told me you got into trouble over that bad luck in Kansas City. Acquitted you, didn't they?"

"Yes sir. But it took an awful long time. I've only been out four months. The money was all tied up, and I wouldn't have touched it, anyway. So I couldn't furnish bond. Then they dragged things out as long as they could, with continuances and everything. I was in two years."

"Helluva thing, aint it?" Blain of the World's Greatest grumbled it through his cigar in an attempt at friendliness. "Keep a man in jail two years, and then tell him he's innocent."

AFTER this they both were silent for a space, the smaller man staring out at the grimy passageway, the heavier, fatter personage walking stodgily to the cage which held the big Nubian, and abstractedly appraising him through the cigar-smoke. At last he grumbled:

"Just trying to think, Patterson. You never worked on my show, did you?"

"No sir." The smaller man appeared grateful for the change of theme. "But you saw my act, though. Maybe you don't remember. It was in St. Louis, just before—"

"Yeh. I recollect. Figured on taking you over for the next season. The blow-off came a week or so later, didn't it?"

"Just ten days, sir."

"Knew it wasn't long." He glanced about the draughty shed. "Kind of a bum place to keep a lion in, aint it?"

"Here?" The little man attempted a return to his old semblance of cheer. "Well, it aint exactly a palace, but then we manage to get along. Besides, he's kind of used to the open air—they had him out at the Swope Park Zoo while I was in trouble. I keep watch over him, and we're sort of company for each other, especially at night. I—"

"Night? You don't stay here at night, do you? Where's your wife at?"

"Her? She—she's dead."

"Oh!" Blain examined his cigar a moment, then jammed it between his lips again.

"Yes sir. Just a month after—the other. The shock—and then all those charges and everything—"

"Yeh, I know how it is."

There was another pause then, in which Patterson's mild gaze again sought refuge in the trash-strewn passageway, and Blain of the World's Greatest mouthed his cigar in abashed, uncomfortable silence. For a long time the pacing of the old lion in its cage and the faint clattering of a board, loosened by the spring wind, formed the only sound, save the muffled hurly-burly of the cobblestoned street a half-block away. Blain rolled his round eyes and puffed vigorously. Then he thrust his hands deep into his pockets and faced the door.

"Too bad," came at last abruptly. "Didn't know nothing about her. Anyway, two years is a long time in the show-game. Wouldn't have remembered the thing at all if I hadn't of recognized your face. What'd they hold you for—criminal negligence?"

"No sir!" There was vehemence in the usually mild voice. "First-degree murder!"

"First-degree what? Where'd they get that stuff?"

The smaller man smiled, but with his lips only.

"It was a frame-up over the insurance," he said.

"Wait a minute." Blain had grasped his cigar by the wet end, and was gesticulating with it, as with a baton. "You're going too fast. Whose insurance?"

"My little girl's. Edith—that was her name, Edith—Edith Elaine Patterson." He repeated it as though the alliteration gave him happiness. "You remember the act, don't you?"

"Kind of."

"Well, the way it happened was, you see, my wife never liked it. She was afraid from the first minute I ever talked about it. That was one reason for the insurance—Alice was sort of superstitious, and she always had a saying that nothing ever happened to anybody who had insurance. So before we ever started the act, she got me to take out a monthly payment policy for Edith. She thought it'd keep away bad luck—you know how women are."

"But it didn't, huh?"

"No sir. But it wasn't the lion's fault, or mine—or anybody's. It was just luck, I guess. You see, I'd had old Major about four years then, and I could do anything with him. Gentle as a dog, sir, and he always went over big, if I do say it myself. Well, the more I worked him, the more I got to figuring

that I had a chance to do something out of the ordinary with Major, and I worked up that act you saw in St. Louis, with that little house over at the side of the arena, and Edith inside it. You remember?"

"Sure." Blain squinted his round eyes as an aid to memory. "You mean the rescue-stunt, where they lit the red fire inside the house, and then the cat, there, went through the fire-hoops and inside the little shack and grabbed the kid by a shoulder-pad and dragged her out in its teeth?"

"Yes—that's the one." Perspiration beaded the little man's forehead. "That was it. You'd have thought old Major was just a big Newfoundland, the way he'd take that pad in his teeth—just that tender. But in Kansas City—" He gazed hard at his sweating palms. "I never could figure what went wrong. I— See that long scar on his shoulder there?" He nodded toward the cage, and the gaze of Blain followed his direction.

"Yeh. Burn, aint it?"

"Yes sir. He was coming out through the hoops, carrying Edith in his teeth, and the tent was just going wild with applause, sir, when all of a sudden I heard a roar and a scream. One of those fire-hoops had slipped and fallen right across Major's shoulder. And after all,—the meek-eyed Patterson looked suddenly up at his visitor,—he's only a jungle-cat, sir. He couldn't understand the pain, you know—and he did just what even a human being would do, sir. He went crazy."

"And killed the kid, huh?"

"Yes sir," came faintly. "I did everything to break the grip of his jaws, sir—but I couldn't do it."

"Huh!" Blain pulled forth his half-smoked cigar and stared at it. "Tough luck! That's when the insurance company stepped in?"

"Yes sir. We'd only had the policy about a year, you know. It was pretty hard for them to give up all that money. They swore out a complaint for me—said I'd fixed it to cause Major to kill her. You know I'd never do a thing like that, Mr. Blain."

"Don't think you would, Patterson. It's a pretty hard-boiled guy that'd kill his own kid."

"Yes sir. It hit my wife awful hard. She never got over it—Edith dying and everything. And I couldn't have furnished bond even if the court had fixed one. You see, that murder charge had tied everything up—the money, you know. They let me out for a few days, though—with a deputy sheriff—when Alice went."

Blain of the World's Greatest snorted vigorously into a purple handkerchief, and mumbled something about drafts and spring colds. Then he moved through the dimness to the lion's cage.

"Not a bad-looking cat, at that," he said, "if it wasn't for that scar."

"No sir, it aint. Course, I never could do that fire-act again, but it's got a lot of other stuff, Mr. Blain—lays down and lets me walk over it, wears a cap and spectacles, and all that sort of thing."

"Can't do much with just one cat in an arena, though."

"No sir, that's right. That's been the objection."

It was a slip. Blain of the World's Greatest turned quickly.

"Objection? Who from?"

THE smaller man's eyes dropped. His fingers twined and twisted. Then with a sudden little jerk of his shoulders, he straightened.

"I don't guess there's any use holding back from a big man like you, Mr. Blain," he said at last. "You're just about the last showman I can talk to. None of the others want me."

"No?" Blain was slipping the band from a fresh cigar.

"No sir. When I first got out, I began making the rounds—I had a little cash then, outside of that insurance money, and I wouldn't touch that if I was starving! But when I tried to hook on, they shied off at my name and wouldn't have me. Said it was bad business. After a while, I sold my arena and what props and stuff I'd had left—had to do it, you know; Major eats a good deal. Changed my name, too—but I couldn't seem to connect. Just like you say—one cat aint worth much in an act. So since then—me and Major—we've just been drifting."

"Wouldn't consider selling the lion?"

"Not until I have to, sir. You see,"—and the perspiration came again,—"he's all I've got left. And I can't hold it against him for what he did—when he didn't mean it. Can I?"

"What're you going to do with that insurance money?"

"I don't know, sir, except that I'll never touch it for myself. If it could give me back my little girl, I'd spend it—and spend it in a minute. If it could bring Alice back, I wouldn't hesitate. If it could help to wipe out the memory of two years in jail, I might not think so much about it. But now,"—he rubbed his

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"That dope I heard today true, boss? Nothin' doin' in salaries tomorrow?"

hands vacantly.—"now it just aint worth spendin'—not on myself. You understand me?"

"Yeh, kind of like blood-money, aint it?"

"Yes sir, that's it. It can't do me any good—just hurt me. Of course, if I didn't have anything else to take care of Major with—"

"Yeh! I get you. Holding onto it for him, huh?" Blain lit his fresh cigar. "It'd give me the willies, though, to have anything around that'd bumped off my kid."

The perspiration was thickening on Patterson's forehead.

"Well," he confessed, "it does me, sometimes. But then mostly he just reminds me of them—when we were all together and getting along fine. Sometimes I can stand in here in the dark and run my fingers through his mane and think it never happened at all, that I'm just bedding him down for the night and that pretty soon I'll go on down to the cars where they'll be waiting for me. It'd be a lot worse without him—I guess that's why I hang onto him. I wouldn't have anything else."

"Aint got much now—in the way of an act."

"I—I guess that's right." Hope was fading for little Meg Patterson. "But then, I don't ask much wages, only fifteen a week and found for me and Major."

"That's fair enough." The circus man stepped forth into the passageway, only to turn at last and wave his cigar before him in baton-like emphasis. "Don't know where I'll put you," he grumbled. "But a lion like that's worth fifteen bucks of anybody's money. And get him out of that barn, understand? First thing you know, he'll have pneumonia."

"Yes sir."

"You got time tonight to do it. Call a dray. Know where winter quarters are?" Blain retraced a few steps and held forth a crumpled five-dollar bill. "I'll hold it out on your first week's pay," he growled as the other man protested. "Show up at the cookhouse for supper. And tell Carson—menagerie superintendent—that I want that lion fed up pretty well for a few days. Get me?"

Then he went on, while behind in the shadows, a little man walked in a vague haze of realization to the lion's cage and stood for a long moment with both arms thrust through the bars, fondling the black mane of the great-jawed, heavily muscled beast. A straying finger touched the wrinkled yet satiny skin of a pink-black scar and lingered there, while the eyes of the man grew old with pain. Then with a sudden pompous fussiness Meg Patterson turned from the cage, brushed himself with swift-working

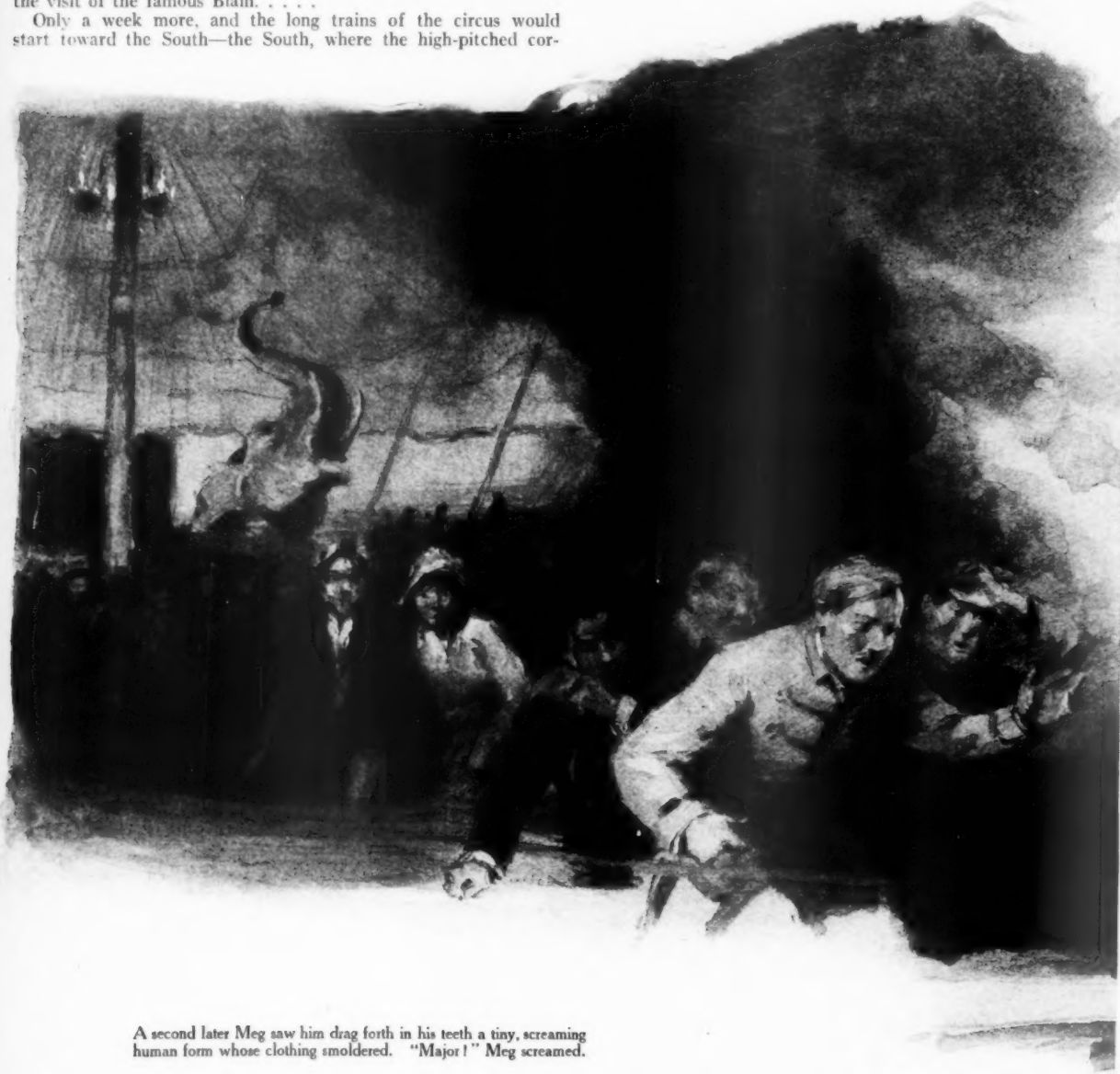
palms, stamped about a moment to free himself from the chill, and fished industriously in an otherwise empty pocket for that five-dollar bill.

"Got to get alive here, Major!" he announced with a sudden show of brusqueness. "The little ones wouldn't have us—couldn't tell a good thing when they saw it. But Blain—Blain knows! It's us for the big time now—for the World's Greatest!"

But a day or so later Meg Patterson, his lion safely sheltered in the steam-heated menagerie house, began to learn a few things about the World's Greatest that caused a vague sense of insecurity to supplant the proud sureness which had thrilled him during the visit of the famous Blain. . . .

Only a week more, and the long trains of the circus would start toward the South—the South, where the high-pitched cor-

The blacksmith shops echoed only to the clanging of single hammers, instead of the scores which should have sounded. The great triphammer stood silent, with rust on its striking face. The sawdust on the floor of the carpenter shop was of a previous season; out of all the mechanism the shaving-machine alone was working, as a necessary replenishment of tent-stakes was effected for the months to come. The harness-shop told a similar story; one man worked there instead of twelve. In the canvas-room the "sailors," with their heavy needles, were patching last year's "top." Everywhere about the quarters. Meg Patterson saw



A second later Meg saw him drag forth in his teeth a tiny, screaming human form whose clothing smoldered. "Major!" Meg screamed.

nets would shrill, the bugles give their staccato call of the spring-time, and the gleaming parade wind its way along the sun-splotched streets on the first appearance of the season! Only a week—yet there was little about winter quarters to indicate the fact. Under the long sheds the tableau- and property-wagons stood shrouded in the dirty tarpaulins which had sheltered them since the snowy days of November when they had been unloaded from the flat-cars at the end of a dying season. No fresh gilt and silver gleamed on the heavy scroll-work; no scintillating sunbursts adorned the spokes of the wheels to efface the markings of mud and dust and grime of a previous summer.

the evidences of a threadbareness which should not exist with a circus at the beginning of its season, a certain air of pinching and of poverty; only the food-rations of men and of animals remained up to standard. And at last came the explanation.

"The old trick don't look like she ought to, does she?" It was the menagerie superintendent who asked the question as he halted beside Meg in the wagon-yard. Patterson evaded making a direct answer.

"I—I don't know. It is a little strange, though, to see a show go out the same way it came in."

"You said something." The superintendent pulled back his shoulders. "I aint used to seeing it, either. Neither's Blain.

That's what hits me so hard—wouldn't care about myself, although I've been with this trick over ten years now. I could stand to see it sink—always another job somewhere else. But it's Blain I'm thinking about—this here show's his blood and heart. It aint got much chance."

"This show?" Meg Patterson gasped. "Why aint it? It's the biggest on the road—"

"Just why the luck's worse against it. Takes money to run this show, and if you aint got it, what are you going to do then? Huh? Blain's hooked!"

"You mean—"

"He's hooked! The last two months last season was just plain hell. First there was that mudhole at Okmulgee that cost him five days' business and over fifty thousand in lost equipment. Then along came the wreck and busted up eight cars for him—to say nothing of fifty head of horses—ring- and draft-stock both. After that rain—day in and day out, just rain, with hardly a penny coming in. It crimped him. Put on top of that this here steel-deal—"

"What steel-deal?"

"New York. The old man's caught on it. That's why he's pinched so hard. Had to borrow last year when the show hit that bad luck, and he's going out this year on the end of his string—a fellow can put the bee on just so hard, and then the good thing stops."

"He's been speculating?"

"Call it that if you want to. When he did it, it looked like common horse sense, but when a thing hits rock bottom and stays there, what're you going to do? He paid eighty dollars a share for stuff that's sellin' for sixty now. There aint no money in selling it, aint no dividends coming from it, and aint nothing but disaster in holding onto it—that is, unless times change. So the old man's doing just what anybody else'd do—keeping his expenses down

as low as possible, cheap labor, cheap materials, cheap acts, cheap everything, and hoping to Heaven he'll manage to skin through somehow."

Out of this Meg Patterson had heard distinctly but two words—cheap acts. Was that why Blain of the World's Greatest had been willing to hire him? Was that why he had taken a broken man and his single lion when even smaller shows had passed them by? It was the first of a series of blows which bruised the pride of the little gray-haired man, which dulled the returning luster in tired eyes—the throb of a new beat in a wearied heart. Nor was it long until the first blow was followed by a second—and one of a different sort that came upon him as, his work finished at the first rehearsal under the dun-colored, patched big top, he turned to view the acts and ensembles which followed, and breathed hard with a realization that cut and hurt. The World's Greatest—was the World's Greatest no longer!

True, the expanse of canvas was the same as it had been in the old, the glorious days. The seven poles still rose high above the billowy dome of the big top, their pennons fluttering in the spring breeze; there were still the three big rings and five broad stages. But that was all that remained of a former greatness—a mere shell. The soul of the circus was gone!

The dress rehearsal brought forth no ballet, no spectacle of massed hundreds, such as had opened the show in other days. The lofty tent-ridges canopied no startling casting-acts. The clowns, as they tumbled into the hippodrome track, were of the cheaper variety, and minus the heavy properties and carefully rehearsed numbers so necessary to a successful "Clown Alley." Of all the show, only one act was massive—and it cost nothing in salaries: the performing elephants. Even here the professional eye of Meg Patterson noted carefully concealed vacancies which told their own story—a story of performing pachyderms sold during the winter that the show might still seem to live.

The result was inevitable. Day after day, town after town passed, and steadily the crowds on the vast tiers of seats grew smaller—the word seemed to have traveled ahead that the World's Greatest had become the World's (Continued on page 111)



*To a girl alone in a
snowbound wilderness
cabin with a wounded
man comes—her enemy*

The Stove

By M. L. C. PICKTHALL

*Illustrated by
William Hottinger*



"I'LL be back the third day from now, at the latest, with the doctor. I've left you firewood enough for three days and more, and you've grub for a month." Garth looked at her anxiously; his strong mouth twitched. Suddenly he leaned forward and brushed her cheek lightly with his yellow beard. "I hate to leave you, little girl," he said with a gentleness not common in him, "but I guess it's Derek's only chance."

"Of course you must go. It's Derek's only chance." Dorette faced him steadily. She was pale, slight, sleepy-eyed, but wilderness born and bred, for all that; one guessed a spirit of steel in that fragile sheath. She finished wistfully: "There'll be nothing for me to do but—wait."

"Keep the stove up," he said.

"I'll do it. And you—if you meet Dufour—"

Rage blazed suddenly in her brother's eyes. "If I meet Dufour," he said through his teeth, "it's the finish for him—or me!"

Without another word he turned and swung down the forest trail on his long run to Mandore.

Dorette watched him until he was no more than a dark shadow among the heavy blue shades that hung from spruce to spruce like tangible banners. All life, all sound, all motion, seemed to go with him. Mile after mile, she knew, on each side of her was nothing but the same silence, the same stillness, league after league of the desolate fir-forest of the North. She went into the cabin and bolted and barred the door behind her as if the solitude were an enemy she must keep out.

The cabin was a pleasant place. The walls were sheathed in red cedar, and there were fur rugs on the floor, and red curtains at the windows. In the center of the larger of the two rooms into which the cabin was divided stood the stove.

Its voice filled the cabin with a roar like the forever unsatisfied roaring of the wind and the sea—a hungry voice. Dorette swung open the door, wincing from the furnace-glow within as she flung on more wood. That was to be her one occupation until Garth should come back—feeding the stove.

She crossed to one of the bunks, like the bunks of a ship, that were built against the wall behind the stove, and looked in.

Derek, her younger brother, lay there without sense or motion, as he had lain ever since the sergeant of police and Garth had carried him in and laid him there. He drowsed now between life and death, shot through the body. At times he swallowed a little broth, but with no knowledge of the hand that fed him. She dared not touch him. There was nothing she could do for him but keep the cabin warm enough to sustain that flickering life till the doctor came.

"If only you could speak to me, Derek," she whispered, "if only I could hear your voice!"

But the only voice that answered was the voice of the stove.

Her mind painted for her the scene she had not witnessed—the hard men of the mines and the lumber camps, still men with formidable eyes, following Cain's trail from Fort Dismay to Anisette; the end of the trail at a little lonely shack blinded in snow, ringed with watchful men; Derek pleading that Maxime Dufour might have "one more chance, boys;" the parley at the door, the shot from nowhere; men storming into the shack over Derek's fallen body, and finding it empty; Maxime Dufour escaped again! She saw it all, heard again Garth's voice in hard-breathed sentences between shut teeth: "But he's not goin' to get away again. He'll have to get food and shelter somewhere; and if it's a thousand miles, we'll follow and shoot him down like the wolf he is!"

She glanced round, pale and shaken, thinking that still she heard that voice of bitter vengeance. But it was only the undertone of the stove, humming its song.

She busied herself about the simple cabin duties. Twice she fed the stove from the pile of wood on the floor beside it. The fierce heat licked out at her each time, just as a savage beast will strike through the bars of his cage, and each time she shut the door with the sense of prisoning some maddened living thing.

Her tasks were soon done. Everything in the cabin was tidied and tidied again. She glanced at the clock. Garth had been gone only an hour. She turned the face of the clock to the wall, took out a shirt she was making for Garth—red-and-black-checked flannel, thick as felt—and stitched resolutely.

Her hearing, accustomed to the sound of the stove as the ear

Illustrated by
William Hottinger



Light-footed as a
cat, he busied him-
self about the stove.

adjusts itself to the thunder of a waterfall, was acute to catch the faintest noises. She heard the tiny sound of the thread passing through the flannel, the soft thud of snow slipping from the boughs of the forest, the least check and stumble in Derek's shallow breathing. Each time she heard this last, her own heart checked and stumbled with it. She held her own breath till her brother's renewed its weak rhythm.

So the morning passed. In the afternoon she found a snowshoe that needed restringing. Deftly as any Montagnais, she twisted the gut and wove the net.

It was dark sooner than she could have hoped. She needed no lamp. The stove filled the cabin with its glow. In the dark it became a beautiful and formidable thing, a shape of dull red with a heart of lambent rose. She glanced at the little windows, sheathed thick with frost-ferns. It would be a cold night. Her thoughts went to Garth—then, with dread, to Maxime Dufour. She dragged her cot from the inner room, set it near the stove and lay down. The warmth was like a hand pressing on her eyelids.

WITH the subconscious watchfulness of those who care for one beloved, she awoke five times in the long night to feed the stove. Each time she thought, with a pang, that Derek was deeper sunken among the pillows. His eyes were not quite closed; the silvery line of eyeball reflected the stove's red glow. She would have liked to close them, but her hand shrank from so prophetic an action.

The last time she woke, the sun had risen. The gathered crystals on the windows were lighted with a glow that paled that of the stove. Dorette went into the inner room and braided her hair.

Her brother was weaker. She pleaded with him, passionately tender: "Just a mouthful of soup, Derry! Wake up, Derry dear! Take it for my sake, Derry!" But her voice, that had

dimly roused him the day before, could not reach him now. She looked round for something she might do for him.

The diminished heap of logs on the floor showed her work enough. She must bring in a fresh supply from the pile behind the cabin. She ate a hasty breakfast and made herself some coffee. Then, hooded and wrapped against the cold, she opened the door.

She stepped into a world of white, blue and black—solid, translucent and motionless, as though built from gems. Where the blue sky touched the black trees there seemed to run a setting of gold. Where the black trees trailed branches to the

snow was a stain of sapphire shadow. It was fiercely cold. She shut the door behind her hastily, ran to the snow-buried woodpile behind the cabin, burdened herself with an armful of small logs, returned, set her load on the threshold, opened the door, and tumbled the wood in upon

the floor. All the morning she worked thus. Her spirits rose; she began to believe that Derek would not die, and soon she might begin to think of Garth's return. The noise of the logs as she flung them on the floor pleased her. It was a change from the one voice that filled the cabin day and night—the voice of the stove.

The next night she was restless. She dared not sleep at first, for fear she should sleep too soundly. Wind came up with the electric stars; the stove sang to a higher, more tremendous note. She could scarcely keep pace with its consuming hunger. The pine-knots and bright birch-sticks fell to ash in a moment. If she slept, she dreamed that the stove was out, and that the cold crept into the cabin in long feathers of frost that twisted under the door like snakes, until one touched her on the throat and she awoke, choking.

Dawn found the sky fleeced with clouds, the cabin warm, and the hurt man yet alive.

Again with the day her heart lightened. In four—five hours she might expect Garth with the doctor from the mines at Mandore. She wound the clock and turned its chipped white face to the room, no longer dreading to read the slow passage of the hours.

Yet five long hours dragged wearily by, and still Garth did not come.

She went to the door. Closing it behind her, that the cold might not get into the cabin even for a moment, she stared down the trail. It ran straight no more than a half-mile; farther than that she could not see. Yet it was less her eyes than her soul that she thus strained to look beyond the forest.

"Garth, Garth, Garth!"

Who had given that wild cry that rang among the trees? For a moment she wondered; then she knew that it had come from her own troubled heart.

She must see beyond the first bend of the trail; she must see if, farther than that, the blue-white ribbon between the trees was still empty of her hope.

She built up the fire again, put on coat and hood and snowshoes, took one glance at Derek and left the cabin. She sped down the trail. She was panting when she reached the first curve. Almost afraid to look, she saw the long white track before her—empty. There was something conscious and deliberate in that

emptiness, as if the forest knowingly withheld from her a secret. She dared go no farther, so turned and fled home.

Garth had not come. Darkness, and Garth had not yet come!

Loneliness and suspense were shaking her strong young nerves. The worst of all was the silence. The voice of the stove became first an annoyance, then a weariness, then an intolerable burden. Its voice was the very voice of silence, of desolation. She flung in the wood angrily. "If there was only some one to *speak* to," she said aloud wildly, "just some one to give me a word!"

There was no one—then, nor through the endless night when she feared to sleep lest in her dreams or in reality, that insatiable thing in the stove that kept them alive might escape her. The stormy dawn came at last—but not Garth.

There was no wood left in the house now. Before she did anything else, she wrapped herself and went to the woodpile.

The woodpile, roofed and sheathed with snow, was heaped against the back of the cabin. She pulled at the butt of a log, and the wood came down with a run, mixed with snow—such dry snow that the wood was not moistened until she held it in her warm hand. The work was a relief to her. She thrust the soft, dark hair out of her eyes and piled herself such a load that she swayed under it.

She took in enough for the day. Yet there was the night.

"Garth will be back by then," she muttered, staring at the stove. "Garth *must* be back by then." The stove sent a screaming rush of flame up the pipe as if in mockery. She felt an unreasoning hatred for it as she went wearily out again to gather even more wood for the night.

Kneeling beside the pile, she groped with numbed hands—nothing but snow.

She thrust in her arm to the shoulder. It met no resistance but that of the snow.

Her heart beat in shuddering throbs. She brought a long pole and prodded the pile, then swung the pole and leveled it. Nothing but snow!

Then she understood. She or Garth or Derek had been drawing supplies from the other side of the pile as well, and the snow had slipped from the roof and filled up the spaces; hardening, it had stretched a roof over emptiness. The pile which had been taken for good hardwood logs, fodder for that roaring, hungry heat within, was only a pile of snow.

Dorette turned slowly and went into the cabin, where she stood by Derek's bunk, staring at the floor. It was enough for the day, but what of the night?

Would Garth return before the night?

SHE looked about the cabin. There were things there, things that would burn. She leaned and kissed Derek's cheek. He did not stir.

She took Garth's heavy ax and began on the chairs.

They were heavy and clumsy things—Garth's pride, for he had made them himself. They would feed the stove well; but they were hard for a girl to chop, even if she struck true as a woodsman; and Dorette's hands were scorched from the door of the stove. As she toiled, her eyes ranged the cabin, calculating on this shelf, that box, that table. Her heart beat to every sound. As the wind rose higher, the bitter day became filled with sounds. A dozen times she ran to the door, crying: "Garth! Garth!" A dozen times she saw only the forest and a driven mist of snow as fine and dry as dust.

By the earliest dusk she had chopped up everything in the cabin. Still the stove roared insatiably. The dried wood of their furnishings, pine for the most part, burned like straw and soon was wholly consumed.

She took the ax again and went outside.

The gray forest fronted her in a rustling drive of snow and shadow. There must be a hundred fallen boughs within range of the cabin. She found one, dragged it from the snow, and into the house. She twisted it apart desperately, and there was blood on the bits she thrust into the stove.

She went out again. Her desperation grew as strength failed. There was a great branch trailing from a spruce, and she tore and wrenched at it, but it would not yield—it was frozen. She swung her weight upon it, sobbing. She struck with all the force remaining in her, but the ax-blade turned in her weary hands. She felt as though the sheer will in her, passionately strong, should sever the bough as by steel. She did not know she was beaten until she sank weakly in the snow, and lay there, sobbing helplessly and softly.

The snow stung her face like heat—like the heat of the stove. If she stayed here, the stove would go out. Struggling to her

knees then, she saw in the growing dark, a man who stood with his rifle on his arm, looking down at her.

"Garth! Oh, Garth!"

But even as the cry left her lips, she knew it was not Garth.

A FIGURE, lithe even under the heavy furs, a face hidden in the cowl he had drawn forward above his fur cap, a certain strange immobility that vaguely chilled her, but surely—help? So swift is thought that in the transitory seconds before she spoke again, her brain had shown her a picture, a memory of a wildcat which she and Garth had vainly tried to corner in the yard—of the creature's utter immobility until it launched itself and struck.

"The stove! Oh, the stove!"

She thought, as her hands went out to that motionless figure in the shadows, that she had spoken all the desperate appeal in her heart. But her only words were: "The stove, the stove!"

"What stove?" he asked.

"The stove. The stove in our cabin. There's—no more wood—"

Surely he understood. Yet he remained motionless, staring down at her.

She gazed up at him with a burning appeal. She had forgotten to rise from her knees. She knelt at his feet in the snow. Her breath came in gasps. "There," she repeated helplessly, "there—in the cabin—the stove! It's going out."

Still he waited.

"There's a sick man there—my brother! Oh," she finished, as he did not stir, "help me, if you're a man!"

"Oh, b'gosh, yes, I'm a man! But why should I help you?"

She had no more words. She lifted and held out to him her bleeding hands.

After a long moment he stirred slowly. Without a word he laid his gun crosswise on two fir branches that grew above her reach yet were easily within his own, and took up the ax. She watched him. Four sharp crosscuts, and the trailing branch fell. He set his foot on it, chopped it quickly into four or five pieces. As each piece rolled free, Dorette snatched it as a starving woman might snatch bread.

"That enough?"

Staggering under her load, she stared at him. "No, no!" she stammered. "Not enough for the night. For the pity of Heaven, cut me some more!"

She hurried toward the cabin, but halfway there he overtook her. Without a word he lifted the logs from her arms into his own. She was too spent to thank him. Dumbly she moved at his side, conscious only that strength was there, help was there, that she might yet save Derek.

Entering the cabin, there was no glow, no light at all. Dorette swung open the door of the stove. Nothing was there but a handful of red ash ringed with gray.

With trembling hands she gathered a few splinters and thrust them in; she crouched before the gaunt iron thing as though she would hold it in her arms and warm it in her bosom. But the man, who had followed her, thrust her aside. She watched him as he shaved a stick into delicate ribbons of wood—watched him as he coaxed them into a flame. He tickled the appetite of the sullen devouring thing in the stove with scraps of resinous bark and little twigs. Presently the fire laid hold on the larger sticks and fed upon them, hissing. He shut the door then and turned to her.

She had lighted a lamp, and in the light stood looking at him, softly bright. Her eyes were stars of gratitude. She said at once: "My brother's still living."

She gestured toward the bunk. His eyes did not follow the gesture or move from her pale face as he said abruptly: "You stay here with him. I'm goin' to get more wood."

Her eyes flashed suddenly with tears. She said brokenly: "You're good. Oh, you're a good man! While you're cuttin' the wood, I'll—thank God you came!"

He went out into the night without answering her.

HE returned in half an hour, loaded mightily. Sitting on the end of her cot, she smiled at him wanly. He did not speak to her. Light-footed as a cat, he busied himself about the humming stove, then went forth again.

When he came back the second time, she was asleep.

Her face, very pale, very pure, was rosed by the glow of the stove. Her hurt hands were curled like the hands of a child. Moving in his noiseless way, he crossed the room and looked down at her.



Those two black figures were sweeping rapidly nearer. He said softly: "I'll show you how you can thank me."

His furred cowl had fallen back. His face also caught the glow-light of the stove. Dark, keen, predatory, it was less the face of a man than of some embodied passion of hate or revenge; the face of an Ishmael, the face of Cain. It looked strange now, so little was it accustomed to the gentleness of expression it momentarily wore, as a breath softens the cold gleam of steel. Light and silent as all his movements were, they showed no gentleness. But he seemed gentle when he lifted the end of one of Dorette's dark plaits, which had fallen to the floor, and laid it on the cot beside her, just because he hesitated and was clumsy.

The plait of dark silken hair was warm; his hand lingered over it. He leaned above her, and her breath was warm. That strangely unmoving regard of his was on her face. As if it had called her from her dreams she woke, and lifted to him the clear eyes of a child. "I—did thank God—you came," she whispered, with a child's simplicity. Sleep clutched her again almost before she had finished speaking.

The man drew back noiselessly, and once more went out.

Sinewy, silent, untiring, he toiled for her all the night. And all the night she slept.

She had slipped into unconsciousness as a child does, worn out with anxiety and fatigue. She woke a woman, and flushed to the hair as she realized what she had done.

The man who had helped and guarded her through the night

was standing in the doorway. The door was open; there was a frosty freshness in the air, which the roaring stove raised to the warmth of summer. The world outside was a dazzle of sun; silver drops rattled from the eaves; a crow called in the forest. It was the first sun of spring, the year's change. In Dorette's heart was a change also, a quickening, a birth of something new and unknown that almost brought tears to her eyes. For the first time in her life she had rested on another's strength, and had found it sweet. That simple heart was in her look as she went to the stranger and said softly: "I did not mean to sleep. Why did you let me?"

He answered almost roughly: "You were tired out."

The tears brimmed over then. She did not know if pain or happiness moved her. She went on: "I said—I knew—that you were a good man."

"Well," he answered, but not as if he were answering her, "for one night."

The wakening blush dyed her cheeks again as she faltered, confused: "We—we can never forget what you—you have done for us—what we owe you."

"We?"

"My brothers and I. Derek's still alive. I almost think he's sleeping better—more natural. When—when Garth comes home, he'll thank you as I do."

(Continued on page 116)

Mamselle Chérie

By GEORGE GIBBS • Illustrated by the Author

Chérie Mohun, the heroine of this brilliant novel, may be accepted a type of the modern American girl. The country's future is in her keeping

The author of this story is familiar at first hand with that life with which his novels—this and others, all distinctly American—are concerned

The Story So Far:

IN Cherry Mohun the gilded youth of 1921 glowed doubly golden. Wealth was hers, and great beauty; hers too were the fine verve and freedom of a generation that had repudiated restraint—hers the cocktails in teacups, the casual swear-word, the midnight motor-ing at high speed, and the love-making that was not slow.

To young-old Doctor David Sangree—a scientist just returned to his America after some years spent abroad in research and in work for the Near East Relief—to him Cherry was at once a problem, a delight and a horror. Sangree had been introduced to Cherry and her family by his lawyer George Lycett, partly because Lycett had invested Sangree's funds (of which he had been in charge during the scientist's absence abroad) in enterprises managed by Cherry's father.

Something in Sangree's first obvious amazement at Cherry's most undébutante sophistication provoked the girl to shock him further; and when her father spoiled an afternoon for her by requesting that she spend it entertaining Sangree, the girl sought revenge. She dared Sangree to go riding with her; he accepted—and she had the groom give him her brother's vicious horse Centipede.

Sangree was thrown, but he got into the saddle again and rode Centipede to a finish ahead of Cherry and her mount. Only when they had returned, and Sangree slid from the saddle in a faint at the gate of the stableyard, did Cherry realize that Sangree's arm had been broken. This was the beginning of a growing



Sangree bent over her awkwardly. "Cherry," he muttered, "don't!"

friendship between these two so-different people, though Mamselle Chérie had many other strings to her bow—in particular the aviator Dick Wilberforce, the ex-soldier Jim Cowan and the wealthy man-about-town John Chichester—the last of whom her mother wished her to marry. She showed a distinct interest in Sangree, however, and he found himself going to divers social affairs for the sake of meeting her and becoming better acquainted with this strange and speed-mad younger set.

Presently calamity came to Cherry Mohun. One night while she was out joy-riding with Jim Cowan, and when her scape-grace brother Jack had come home drunk, her father suffered a paralytic stroke. And soon Cherry learned that misfortunes never come singly: Mohun's stroke had been precipitated by business worry. The firm of Mo-

hun and Company had, in fact, been forced into bankruptcy.

Debts pressed now upon the Mohun household. Jack did nothing but talk. Mrs. Mohun schemed to marry off Cherry to the wealthy Chichester. Finally Cherry discovered that her mother had accepted a loan of ten thousand dollars from Chichester—a sort of advance payment on Cherry. Without regard to the risk to her reputation involved, the distracted girl went immediately to Sangree in his bachelor apartment, seeking aid and advice. And when, bit by bit, she had confided the whole ghastly situation to him, he upheld her resolution not to marry Chichester. But—what was she to do? (The story continues:)

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"Rameses," she said, "do you think that anyone I know could have recognized me coming out of your rooms that night?"

DAVID SANGREE was silent for a long moment. Cherry had sunk with a gasp into her chair and sat with her chin in her hands gazing into the blaze as though her mind in its obscurity still struggled toward warmth toward light. She hardly seemed to be aware of him standing by the table behind her, his arms folded, his brows bent while he struggled with her problem. Her confession had stirred him deeply. If absolution was what she wanted, he would give it to her.

He took two or three paces away, thinking deeply, and then turned, one hand on the back of her chair, following her gaze into the fire.

"Of course, it's all very terrible. You don't love John Chichester. You can't marry him—that's out of the question." His voice sank a note, the deeper in its vibrations. "It isn't your body only that you'd sell, Cherry, but your immortal soul. Nobody has a right to dispose of that, not your mother, not even you."

He heard the quick intake of her breath as she leaned back in her chair, as though a weight had been taken from her shoulders, but she said nothing, and he spoke again even more deliberately.

"I'd rather see you dead than married to Chichester," he added. She turned her head to look at him, but he went on as though thinking aloud:

"I—I'm glad that you don't care for him. That would have been bad enough. But to have married him just to save a situation or to bring yourself the luxuries which misfortune denies you—that would have been abominable! May I speak plainly? To me there's no very wide distinction between the woman who solves the problem of poverty by signing a marriage contract and the other woman who doesn't bother to sign anything."

Cherry moved uneasily. It was what Bruce Cowan had meant. But the phrases had a deeper significance from the lips of David Sangree.

"I don't know just what to say to you," he went on, "except—er—that I've always had faith enough in you to believe that you would do nothing so—er—unintelligent as that. So, if I'm shocked

at what has happened to you at home, I'm not surprised at your horror of the consequences of such a marriage. You're quite right; you have your own life to live. No matter how much you owe your mother—your father, even—you do not owe them as much as that."

He paused a moment and then said slowly:

"I don't know that you've—er—given me the right to question you, but it seems rather important. Do you—care for anyone else?"

She turned her head toward him, but he did not look at her.

"Why, no, Rameses," she said quietly. "Why do you ask?"

"Because—I thought perhaps—er—Wilberforce."

"Dicky! Why did you think of him?"

"Oh, I just thought—it's none of my business of course—but he has money, hasn't he?"

She smiled at his awkwardness, and then settled back in her chair.

"Yes, perhaps," she said with a shrug. "But if I were marrying for money, I might as well marry the *most* money, Rameses, mightn't I? I don't want to marry anybody." She made a petulant gesture. "Can't you see? Least of all because I *have* to!"

Sangree fell silent. He was thinking of Bruce Cowan, but he did not speak his name. Perhaps he feared to drop this bombshell into the midst of a situation which was already troublous enough. But her last phrases seemed for the present to answer him. He had paused with one elbow on the mantelshelf and seemed to be groping with difficulty for his words.

"It's a pity, Cherry—your position, I mean. You were meant for early marriage, I think. All the girls of your set are. Every year a whole flock of you comes, like—shall I say like sheep upon the market? If you aren't disposed of—engaged it's called—within a reasonable time, you are a failure. You see, marriage as a profession is what you're brought up to seek—without knowing about anything except—er—the clothes—bridesmaids. . . . Lombroso, you know, says that women were meant to be the parasites of men. I don't agree with him. Nietzsche too! But I've never been able to think of you as a parasite, Cherry."

"And yet that's what I am," she said. "That's what I've been trained to be. Curious I've never thought of it before."

"You didn't have to think of it. All your thinking was done for you." And then with a frown: "But that's what makes your situation so cruel."

"But I can't blame Mother for that. She only did as other mothers do." She shrugged in deprecation. "I was to make a brilliant marriage. I might have married somebody with money in the course of time. I might have drifted into it. I would have had something to offer in exchange—money of my own—to help pay my way. But don't you see how impossible the thing is now? I have nothing, less than nothing. . . . Debts of honor. Somebody must pay those."

SANGREE went to the table and took up his pipe.

"You don't mind if I smoke?"

"No; please do."

The question and answer seemed to put him on a surer footing of his old relationship to her—to eliminate the possibilities of the merely sentimental, and to place him definitely in the rôle of guide, philosopher and friend.

He filled his pipe slowly and then sat in the chair upon the opposite side of the fire.

"Let's face the situation honestly," he said at last. "The burden of it seems to fall upon you. There's a way out. There always is, if you've got the courage."

"I will do anything—anything," she gasped.

He regarded her a moment and then spoke deliberately:

"Then you've got to play the game."

"What do you mean, exactly?"

"The greatest game in the world—the greater, when the odds are against you. The game—Life. You're just beginning to know what it means."

"It frightens me a little."

"It needn't. The odds are not too great, if you'll let me help."

"You!" She started forward in her chair, staring at him in incomprehension.

Sangree lighted his pipe, puffing slowly.

"Yes, I can help you. You know, I'm not—er—altogether ruined. I have a little money."

"Dr. Sangree! Never!"

"Please listen. I haven't the slightest need for it. I get a princely salary at the University, you know."

"I couldn't—"

He frowned.

"Whom would you rather owe—me or Chichester?"

"Why—that isn't the question."

"It is—that, precisely. Wouldn't you rather owe me ten thousand dollars than owe it to John Chichester? If you wouldn't, then you can't set a very high value on our friendship. And you see, Cherry, you aren't under the necessity of marrying me!"

She turned her head away and bent it into her hands. "Don't joke, please!" she muttered.

"It's no joke. The obligations of friendship have no string tied to them. That's why they're so significant. I'm desperately in earnest. That loan must be repaid. If your mother wont do it, you will have to."

"She must—"

"Perhaps she will. But you'll need every dollar you can find. The money I offer you will help to pay some of your debts until you can move to a more modest neighborhood. What I propose is this: I have a house uptown. It's nothing much in the way of a house, but it will do. The people who occupy it have been waiting to move into an apartment and will give it up on short notice. I can arrange to have them out in six weeks if you say the word. The rent is not large—only seventy-five dollars a month, and you needn't bother about paying me until you're ready. I've got enough."

"I couldn't let you do this. I couldn't—"

"I shall consider your acquiescence the measure of our friendship," he cut in gravely.

"Where you give all and I give nothing?" she murmured.

HE laughed softly. "You can't measure friendship in money, Cherry. There are things that can't be bought or sold. They're prizes only won by deserving effort. I attract your attention by falling from a horse, but I only hold it by getting on again—"

"Please!"

"You see, if I hadn't broken my arm, I should never have known how sorry you could be. That was really worth discov-

ering, but it wasn't information that I could have bought, except at the cost of my broken arm and your own lacerated feelings. These are prices rather higher than the dollar-mark, because they have to do with the things of the spirit."

As she was still silent, he communed with his pipe for a moment. "If you care for my friendship enough to test its value, now is your time. It isn't as though I were denying myself anything in helping you. I'm not. I've never spent my income—except this winter, when I went about a little; and you know how little that means to me! I've got everything I want—everything. And it will make me very happy to feel that I'm doing something for you. The money is rotting in a bank. Nobody need know where you get it. Come now, Cherry, say you will—wont you? You'll make me very happy."

He paused and stared at her, for a slight sound had come from her bent head, and as he looked, a single tear glistened in the lamplight. He took a pace forward and bent over her awkwardly.

"Cherry," he muttered, "don't!"

It startled him a little that his offers should have had this effect upon her. He had tried to put into his tones an air of matter-of-fact which should set her at her ease. Her position, too, here alone with him in his rooms, was delicate enough without the hazard of undue sentiment. So he straightened and knocked his pipe out on the hearth while his voice with an effort found its most dispassionate tones:

"Oh, I say, Cherry, don't cry, please! There's nothing to cry about, you know."

"I—I didn't come here for th-that kind of help, Rameses," she gasped. "I—I just came because I had to tell somebody. I—I just wanted you to say wh-what you *did* say—about not marrying John Chichester: that was all. And you said it. I knew you would. It took a weight from me that has been bearing me down to earth—for days. But I didn't want you to offer me the kind of help you did."

"Why not? I hoped you were giving me the right to offer it."

To his great relief she straightened now and wiped her eyes, smiling at him with her old frankness.

"Good old Rameses!" she said. "As if I didn't know that you were lying about your princely salary! Why, you're as poor as I am!"

He was discomfited for a moment, and looked away from her.

"You mean that you wont accept my offer?" he muttered.

"I can't, Rameses—not the money. Not the money!" She thrust out her hands to him with a generous motion of appeal. "But I'll take the house—rent it. I hope we shall be able to manage that. We've got to manage it somehow. And the sooner we move, the better."

"I'll make the arrangements at once."

SHE rose and picked up her wrap—with the same air of decision with which she compressed her lips in a thin line of resolution.

"There'll be a terrible fuss, but I'm equal to it now. Jack will storm, and Mother—" She paused and gave a dry laugh. "We may have to take Muzzy away in the ambulance. But she'll have to go in the end. My mind is made up. Oh, Rameses!" she gasped. "If you knew the joy of coming to this decision! Any decision! If you knew how vague and uncertain everything has been! And now, though the future isn't very clear, it's something to take the first step and know that it's the right one."

"We must plan for the future," he said, "but I'm not afraid for you. You'll let me help, wont you?"

"Of course." She thrust out her hands again, and he took them both in his. "You've done such a lot already. You see, I can't get along without you."

Her eyes were heavy with fatigue, and there was a pathetic droop at the ends of her lips. At that moment she seemed very childlike in her dependence upon him. She seemed so much to need the solace of a caress. It would have been the most natural thing in the world for him to have taken her in his arms and given her some of his own strength. But he only pressed her hands in his; their eyes met for a long moment, the frankness of hers blending slowly into soberness under his gaze and turning at last to the clock upon the mantel, which marked the hour of one.

"I must go at once!" she exclaimed.

He picked up his hat and coat.

"I'll go with you," he said.

"Do you think that's wise? You'd better just let me slip out. I'll find a taxi."

"Impossible! I'm going to take you home."



"Now, Cherry," he said to her gently, "tell me exactly. I know a great deal. I haven't slept always."

She stood for a moment at the mirror, adjusting her hat.

"I know I've done a foolish thing." And then with a careless shrug as she turned toward him: "But I don't suppose it matters much, now."

"I don't agree with you," he declared savagely as he reached for the knob. And then in a lowered tone: "The elevator runs all night, but we'll go down the stairs. Wait a moment."

He went out into the silent corridor, and at his signal she followed quietly. On the third floor a head poked out of an open door whence came the sounds of male voices, and they both heard a comment made, the sound of an exclamation, followed by suppressed laughter.

Cherry was snickering softly, but Sangree caught her elbow and hurried down the stairs.

"Damn them!" he muttered.

On the ground floor the elevator man was dozing on his bench, but he straightened as they passed him, and down the front steps into the street Sangree felt the creature's gaze boring into his spine. They walked rapidly and found a taxi on the Avenue.

"Good Lord," she gasped with a sudden accent of contrition as the vehicle spun upon its way, "I never once thought of *your* reputation!"

He laughed easily.

"I should have, Rameses. Will you forgive me? I didn't think—"

"Nonsense!"

"Poor Dr. Sangree!" she said. "If they call you a Don Juan—"

"They may. But the idea is rather absurd, isn't it?"

"I don't think I like it, Rameses," she finished soberly.

At the house in Seventy-eighth Street he saw her to the door,

and after exacting a promise that she would visit the house uptown with him in a few days, he dismissed the taxi and walked down town alone.

HE could not reproach himself for the counsel that he had given her. God knew, he had no hope of benefiting by it. He needed no salve to his conscience in having advised her against the thought of this preposterous marriage, born out of the enormities of modern social dogma, which traced their origin back to the jungle where the value of women was reckoned in cattle. There was higher value here—not to be computed in the conventional way. Alicia Mohun did not know this Cherry that Sangree knew, had never known her; nor was John Chichester with all his knowledge of the characteristics of women of another sort, capable of passing judgment upon her.

Sangree smiled grimly as he thought of John Chichester. Ten thousand dollars! How many head of cattle did that amount represent according to the appraisal of the jungle north of Forty-second Street? A shrewd device of Mrs. Mohun's, but paltry, unworthy, and not quite human. Chichester wanted Cherry,—ten thousand dollars' worth of Cherry,—but he should not have her. No, by God! Anybody but him—even Bruce Cowan—but not John Chichester!

Pacing furiously on his way home, Dr. Sangree was in a savage mood when he reached his dwelling-place. The night man at the elevator was nodding over a newspaper when Sangree entered, but he rose with an air of sudden awakening to his responsibilities, which it seemed had been definitely challenged.

"I don't like to speak about it, sir," he said with a solemn air as he seized the hoisting apparatus in the lift, "but you must know the rule about women here at night."

Sangree boiled within, but he governed his tongue.

"Well?" he asked.

"That young woman in your apartment, sir," said the man coolly. "I don't want to report it, but you see I'm here to keep the rules. It won't do to let it pass."

A swift moment in which to decide whether to knock the man down or to hand him a bank-note. Sangree resisted the first impulse, which would have precipitated the car into the basement or sent it through the roof.

"She was my sister," he lied calmly. "She didn't know the rule. She went home again."

"Oh, I see, sir. But of course I have to do my duty—"

The elevator stopped, and Sangree drew a bill from his pocket.

"All right. Just forget it!" he growled.

"Oh, all right, sir. But you understand—"

"Yes, I do. Good night," he snapped and went down the hallway. Damn the man! He was too civil by half, and his solemn air didn't conceal his insulting metropolitan omniscience.

Sangree turned the key and opened the door. The room was redolent of her moments of penance and his own asceticism. The comedy in the elevator seemed a cruel piece of buffoonery. He had lied to the night man and paid for the privilege of the lie. Convention again—which made a falsehood of the most irreproachable acts of existence! In his moment of doubt, Sangree had said that Cherry was his sister. And yet, after all, was not that the truth? His sister.

Chapter Sixteen

DURING that month Sangree saw little of Cherry, but her calls upon the telephone reassured him as to the quality of her courage, and without comment she reported the success of the undertaking. He put together, from the fragments of conversation, the scene at the dinner-table when Cherry had exploded her practical petard into the midst of their hopeful hallucinations. To them it must have had something of the nature of an infernal machine. He did not hear until afterward what part Jim Mohun himself had played in the plan, or what were its reactions upon mother and brother, for as Sangree knew, Cherry was already ashamed of her mother's weakness and her brother's inefficacy, and meant, if it were possible, that no one should know of her difficulties in convincing them that there was nothing else to be done. Upon Jack's part he imagined long-winded arguments, reinforced by vague hopes and vaguer promises; upon Alicia's, tears, recriminations and perhaps hysterics.

In the Olympian Club he heard of the advertisements of the sale of the contents of both houses at auction. At the Club also he saw John Chichester, but that gentleman now passed him by

with a sober air and a mere nod of recognition. From Genie Armstrong he learned of the sale of Alicia Mohun's pearls over the counter at Tiffany's for a considerable sum, which possibly explained John Chichester's air of preoccupation. Demi-John was not a person who cared to admit a failure in anything, though the end of his hopes with regard to Cherry must have been revealed to him very soon after Cherry's visit to Sangree's rooms. His manner puzzled Sangree, though it did not annoy him. He imagined at first that Alicia Mohun had told John Chichester of the nature of Cherry's curious friendship for Sangree, but that did not seem to explain John Chichester's air of restraint, which was evident when they were in the same room, an air which had some of the milder qualities of reprobation.

But whatever its cause, Sangree regarded it with the good-natured tolerance of one who has little to lose. If never before, John Chichester now belonged to a phase of life which Sangree relinquished with little regret. His dues at the Olympian were paid until the end of the year, and since he could no longer afford its luxuries, his resignation would take effect at that time, when he would adapt himself to the situation now demanded by his slender means.

Sangree had taken his new point of view with singular calm. Those of his new acquaintances who chose to follow him into social exile could do so if they liked, but he cherished few hopes of them. His older friends he felt he could rely upon. His position was quite different from that of Cherry, who must, if he knew the world, begin very soon to feel the stings of benefits forgot. He knew that she was to suffer acutely, if she had not already done so, in her alienation from those who had once been her intimates. But it now appeared that once having come to a decision, Cherry had performed her duty to herself and her family with a precision and dispatch which counted not upon the opinion of the world.

CHERRY'S plans, however, as he later learned, had been less difficult of accomplishment because of an unexpected source which came to her with all the gentleness of aid from Heaven itself. After the talk with her mother which had resulted in a renewal of their quarrel, it seemed scarcely possible for her to fight her battle alone; but having made her decision, she did not recant, though she saw nothing short of violence as an alternative to yielding to her mother's insistent threats and tears. It had been a dreadful morning, and she sat in her father's room thinking of the last disturbing interview that she had had with her mother. James Mohun was upright near her in his Morris chair, where he now spent most of the day in the sunlight by the window overlooking the street. She thought that he was dozing, but some impulse made her turn to look at him. His gaze was fixed on her—a calm, untroubled look, "like that of a child which has just awakened," as she expressed it. He almost seemed like somebody that she didn't know, or rather like the father she scarcely remembered in the past, when she was a child, before the family came to New York, when they had lived in the old house at Leiperville; for there used to be time then for Jim Mohun to romp with Jack and Cherry in the evenings before bedtime. It was the look that he had had in his eyes when he tucked Cherry into bed.

She couldn't understand at first. She had become so accustomed to the shadows of worry that had come when they had moved to New York. Now it seemed as though the illness which had struck him had suddenly gone, taking with it all the pain which had been its cause, leaving his mind and body quite placid and undisturbed. His speech, too, was distinct, clearer than it had been since before the stroke. It almost seemed as though for some purposes of his own, until that moment, he might have been dissimulating.

"Now, Cherry," he said to her gently, "tell me."

And then as she protested, he went on very calmly: "Tell me exactly. I know a great deal. I have heard. I haven't slept always, and the doors have not always been closed." He smiled at her again, but he seemed to know exactly what he was about, and when she tried to evade him, he cornered her.

"Your mother," he said softly, with a glance at the door, "has been trying to make you marry John Chichester to save our fortunes. I know that. You don't want to marry him, and you've refused. I know that, too. I'm glad." He leaned forward and patted her shoulder. "I was afraid that you might agree on my account—but I'm glad that you wouldn't!"

"Oh, Daddy—don't!" she whispered painfully.

"Oh, I'm just telling you this because I'm glad you haven't made the same mistake that I did. You (Continued on page 164)

Fallen Arches

By J. FRANK DAVIS



Illustrated by
Hawthorne Howland

"THE extreme conservatism with which I am playing 'em tonight," remarked Captain Bill Titus, gathering in his winnings, "is due to the fact that I have to start tomorrow mawnin' on a long and venture-some journey into the wilds of Santa Gertrudis County, and I may need funds."

"You're as funny as the income tax," growled Reese Warland, the host, who had lost the pot to Bill because it would have been bad poker to call, but suspected he had been the victim of a whizzer. "Conservative! You ol' crook. I hope you go away and stay away until you get so you can hold 'em reasonable and play 'em honest."

"All of which," Joe Ansell put in mildly, "seems to have to do with ancient matters and not with this hand I have just dealt."

"You shorely didn't deal me anything that could be called a hand," Chief of Police Phil Ewing, on his left, declared. "Pass. Now and forever!"

"Pass, not necessarily forever," said Captain Bill, who had noted that two of his cards were Jacks and the other three nondescript. Warland rapped the table.

"In that case," Doctor Bannister commented, with a fine show of generosity and candor, "I am compelled to open for a mere trifle—say, four dollars."

Joe Ansell scanned his hand and seemed to think aloud: "With small threes-of-a-kind like this, I could just see four and let all the speculators in cheap, and some fool for luck might make a better threes and take it. On the other hand—"

He brought forward four brown one-dollar chips, then five more and hesitated. He added ten. "You and I," he said confidentially to Doctor Bannister, "will keep these pikers out and make it two-handed. That's the right technique in playing this hand, as the feller said, and I shall not depart from the right technique by one jot or tittle. Fifteen better."

"Pass," Bill said cheerfully. "Notwithstanding the long and loose conversation made with intent to deceive, I might have drawn cards if it cost only Doc's four and the five-dollar jot, but I ab-so-lutely decline to see the ten-dollar tittle."

Doctor Bannister, after Warland also had thrown away his hand, unhesitatingly saw the fifteen-dollar raise and called for two cards. The dealer took one. Bannister bet a twenty-five-cent chip.

"How much you got there in front of you?" Ansell grinned, and when the Doctor, counting, gave the amount as twenty-nine dollars and a half, brought out just that amount. "Tap you!"

Doctor Bannister reinspected his cards, studied Ansell's meaningless poker smile, meditated, and came to sudden decision.

*Meet here Cap'n Bill
Titus, knight of the cactus
and the purple sage,
in a great adventure*

"He either fears his feet too much—" he murmured, obviously quoting, and swept all his visible assets into the center.

"I got, now that I come to look 'em over," said Ansell a little shamefacedly, "the same two pairs I had when I started. Kings up."

"There's your receipt," gloated the Doctor, displaying three fives and raking in the pot.

"Joe will get it into his head every little while that he's good enough to get away with things like that," commented the Chief of Police commiseratingly, preparing to deal. "Hard luck, Joe—and nobody cares a-tall."

"He came near making me ditch 'em, at that," Doctor Bannister confessed. "Fives get awful small at that stage of the game, and he might have had threes-of-a-kind like he said; he's been known to tell the truth when it would serve a bad purpose."

"What was that classic you spouted, Doc?" Ewing asked. "Sounded sort of familiar."

The Doctor, stacking his winnings by colors, declaimed the quatrain sonorously, correcting, for the sake of literary accuracy, the word he had whimsically misquoted:

"He either fears his fate too much,
Or his deserts are small,
That dares not put it to the touch
To gain or lose it all."

"It translates. 'Let the tail go with the hide,'" said Warland. "I remember. Shakespeare!"

"You could lose some money betting on that. Want to?" challenged the Doctor.

"I do not. I can lose enough at draw," their host declared. "Wouldn't I be a fish to bet on literature against you?"

"No more of a fish than you've been most of the evenin' bettin' on cards and your judgment against the rest of us," Bill Titus asserted cheerfully. "All right. This is another hand."

According to their almost invariable rule, the game stopped promptly at midnight, and with the cashing of their chips, the five long-time friends sat back, rolled fresh cigarettes and talked of other things than cards, all the happy acrimony of the session

forgotten. To none of them were such losses as he might have sustained of any consequence: Warland, cattleman and bank president; Ansell, leading real-estate operator of Summertown; and Captain Titus, oil-operator, San Antonio bank-director and all-around capitalist, were men of large means; and Chief of Police Ewing and Doctor Bannister were old-timers who had foreseen the growth of their section of the country and invested wisely. With the exception of the Doctor, every one of them, in youth, had forked a horse on the range; Titus and Warland had distinguished themselves as Texas Rangers.

"What's the idea of this journey down into Santa Gertrudis County?" Warland asked Captain Bill. "Your wells down there misbehavin', or something?"

"No," Bill said. "Barring one mean fishing-job at seventeen hundred feet, they're all doing fine—and doctoring sick wells isn't in my line anyway. No, I've got some business to do at Zulema." He inhaled smoke meditatively. "Any of you fellers ever happen to meet up with Alfredo Blake, sheriff down in Santa Gertrudis?"

"I have, once, just in the line of turning over a prisoner," Ewing said.

"I saw him when he was a young feller," Warland added. "Old Pete Blake's boy. I met up with both those boys, twelve-fifteen years ago. Which one is this Alfredo, the dark one or the light one?"

"The light one," the Chief told him. "Miguel—he was the youngest—got killed in an election ruckus."

"Oh, I remember," said Bill. "He and Alfredo were voting Mexes from across the river that had been theoretically first-paper citizens of Texas for about thirty minutes. There were two political factions in the county in those days."

"Did the Mexicans vote?" asked Ansell.

"They did," replied Ewing.

"This Alfredo and his crowd killed the gang that killed his brother, pronto, and thereafter the election passed off pleasant and calm. I've heard there hasn't been any opposition ticket in Santa Gertrudis from that day to this. Wouldn't be, I reckon. As I remember it, Alfredo was quite thorough."

Captain Bill looked thoughtful. "Bad idea to oppose Alfredo when he has any little scheme he wants to slip over down thataway, I take it."

"There's been times when it's been fatal. You aint aimin' to have any run-in with Alfredo in his own town, are you, Bill?"

Titus took letters from an inner pocket and selected one.

"I got this three-four weeks ago from Jim McMasters—he's our superintendent down on that Derrick City property," he said. "Pretty knowing feller, Jim. He's lived down there in one or another of those river counties a long time." He looked about the circle apologetically. "It's kind of a long letter, but it's right interesting, and I reckon it tells the story quicker'n I could."

"The night's young yet. Shoot," Warland encouraged him.

"He writes about the progress of things generally,"—Bill turned to the second sheet of the rather bulky missive. "—and then he reports on a trip he had to make to Zulema to file some papers at the county courthouse. Then he says:

"There's a thing I see at Zulema that might mean something and might not, but I reckon I ought to tell you and let you look into it if you want to. When I got the filing done, I drove on about ten miles beyond the town down the river to spend the night with an old

friend of mine that has a farm there, and when I come back the next morning, I stopped off a few minutes at the courthouse, just to sort of say howdy to the folks around there, and while I was there I happened to read over the notices on the courthouse door.

"There was one there that said there would be a sale of land for unpaid taxes on the eighteenth of next month, and gave a list of several pieces of land just by numbers, so you can't tell for sure where the land is. I've taken a list of the numbers without anybody seeing I was doing it. It is on another sheet with this letter. You can have them looked up if you think it is worth doing.

"What struck me funny about this notice is two things: In the first place the notice was stuck way down in a lower corner of the door, where it wouldn't be so likely to be noticed with all the other papers that was stuck on there, and it was all stained and smeared and smudged, as if it had been there a long time, so that most anybody that happened to come along would swear it was some old notice and not read it, maybe. It looked older and more worn-out than some notices that had been there for months. But it was plumb new. It hadn't been there the day before. I aint making any mistake about this, because I had a lot of time to kill that first day, and I must have read every notice on the door two or three times.

"The second thing about the notice is that this sale on the eighteenth of next month is announced 'between the hours of ten A. M. and four P. M., in or about the county courthouse,' which sure gives the sheriff some margin in picking his time, place and audience. What for, if there isn't something funny?"

"I can't help remembering that some of that stuff we've had our eyes on to the northwest of us belongs to owners that we haven't been able to get track of, and that haven't paid their taxes for some time. This sale that's coming off may not have a thing to do with that stuff, but maybe you would like to look up the numbers. I can't. The only place I could get a big enough map would be there at the courthouse, and if this long-shot guess should happen to be right, it would put them wise.

"There's a game somewhere, sure, or that notice wouldn't been all mussed up and sort of hid like it is, but I don't have any particular reason to say it is a game that interests us. It just might be. Whatever it is, Sheriff Blake is sure into it, because he handles those notices. The Sheriff, I don't guess I need to tell you, is some bad *hombre* when he needs to be, although I have always found him pleasant enough in our dealings.

"I don't know as I ought to have taken up so much of your time with what is just a hunch and has more chances to be wrong than right, but if I didn't, I would feel like maybe I was overlooking a bet."

Captain Bill refolded the letter. "The rest is about other things," he said.

"Today is Tuesday," remarked Warland. "You get down to the oil property tomorrow night, which gives you Thursday to make medicine with McMasters, and you set out before sunup Friday for Zulema, which gets you there well before ten A. M. I take it for granted the hunch was right."

"Those numbers describe eight thousand acres, scattered in several pieces, to the northwest of us, all of them land that our geologists think ought to have oil. There isn't a parcel in the lot that we haven't been trying to get hold of. Other companies too, natchully, especially the Gurley-Lubin crowd!"

"Dirty work at the crossroads," Joe Ansell grinned.

"There might be, at that," Doctor Bannister said seriously. "Going up against the sheriff of one of those Mexican counties, in his own county seat, isn't regarded as the safest of indoor sports."

"That's why I'm telling you fellers," Bill said. "I'm going down there to take a look, and I'm aimin' to bid on that land if there don't anybody stop me. I wanted to get all the line I could on him."

"What is he—half Mex?" asked the Doctor.

"Everybody is, down in Santa Gertrudis," Warland said. "Them that aint half, are quarter. The Mexican population of that county, figurin' 'em to the third generation, must be fifty to one."

"And this Alfredo carries 'em all in his pocket," the Chief of Police added.

"And is bad," summed up the Doctor.

"Bad is right," Ewing agreed, "according to his reputa-



"I came over to bid on some pieces of land you're sellin' today," Bill said.



"I'd better be in that courthouse sharp at ten," Bill growled. "Drive up right in front We might want to get away pronto."

tion. He's a pleasant enough *hombre* to meet, though. He looks sort of Mex, for all he's lighter complected than you usually find 'em, but that time I met up with him, he didn't act it, not a-tall. For one thing, he hasn't any more accent than you have. But when it comes to running his county, it's pretty generally known that he spells *Boss* with a capital *B*. And his idea of discipline runs in the direction of firearms. They say he's almighty fast with a pistol."

"His daddy would have taught him that," Bill said. "Old Pete was shore quick and fatal. You remember, Reese, he was on a posse with us after a gang of rustlers when we were in the Service."

"I remember. He did some able shootin', that time, and he didn't hesitate to be up in front where the trouble was, either. The old man had considerable reputation as a killer."

"He was a killer, but I don't ever remember hearing he was bad," said Bill, a distinction so common in the descriptive language of the Southwest that the others appreciated exactly what he meant. "He was reckless, and easy to get mad, and quick on the trigger; but the other feller always had a run for his money. And he wasn't treacherous—ever. He had a reputation for being honest, too. Some said he was so careful about tell-

ing the truth that he kind o' leaned backward. Any promise he made was the same as kept."

"This Alfredo's got that habit, according to what I've heard," Ewing said. "They say it's harder to get him to promise anything than to catch an armadillo by the tail, but once you've got his word, he sticks. I reckon, though, it's his one virtue. He's a killer, and he's bad."

"Mix that old reckless white blood up with *pelado* Mexican, and you get a moderately dangerous combination," the Doctor commented. "Figure you have to go and do that bidding on that land yourself, I suppose."

"Natchully," Bill replied. Bannister's comment and the tone in which it was made had not really implied that he thought there was any alternative. "That or let 'em get away with it. I don't know as it will do any harm for McMasters to be along with me, so long as I do all the talking, but to send him there to handle it by himself— He has to live in Santa Gertrudis County afterwards."

Warland nodded. "There's lots of things Blake could do to him that he might think twice about before he'd do 'em to a stranger from outside, especially one that's as well known one place and another as you," he agreed. "At that—s'pose one

two of us go along with you, Bill, to sort of see the cards get thrown around fair during the game."

"No," vetoed Bill. "Blake would have an excuse, then, to say that a gang came in and tried to intimidate him—and twenty of his crowd could swear to it before twelve more of his crowd, sitting as a jury, if anything happened. No. It's got to be played peaceful and quiet. McMasters can be with me, natchully enough, because he's an employee of the oil company, but any more friends would only be likely to tangle things up."

Warland admitted the reasonableness of this. It was characteristic of all five of the old-timers that none of them suggested or even thought of such a thing as Bill's staying away from Zulema and surrendering his chance to buy the coveted land merely because going to Zulema might possess elements of danger. It was also characteristic that, Bill now having gained all the information they could give him regarding the border sheriff, they made very little more talk about the matter. If any of them had been asked to explain why they neither asked Bill what he proposed to do at Zulema or how he planned to do it, he would have replied, probably, with some surprise at the foolishness of the question: "You can't figure how to play a hand before the cards have been dealt, can you?"

CAPTAIN BILL and Jim McMasters, his superintendent, came in their tin chariot over a swelling rise in the mesquite- and cactus-sprinkled prairie, at ten minutes of ten o'clock on Friday morning, and saw the town of Zulema sprawled along the river bank before them.

Important though the place might be as the center of political activities of Santa Gertrudis County, Zulema was not impressive to the eye. Its accredited population was a scant four hundred, and residents of the hustling new oil-town of Derrick City, back on the railroad, who were maintaining, rather unconvincingly, that the time was not far distant when they would capture the county seat, were wont to maintain bitterly that to achieve that four-hundred-population mark, Alfredo Blake and his friends had tallied all the Zulema dogs and a considerable fraction of the goats. With the sole exception of the quick-growing oil-town, however, it was the largest community in the county; Santa Gertrudis, for all its thirty-seven hundred square miles, contained fewer than five thousand souls.

The main street straggled crookedly up from the river, with other thoroughfares, seven or eight of them, starting off from it ambitiously but petering out in early discouragement. Fully half the larger buildings were of adobe, Mexican in shape and design; scattered among them were low frame structures; out where the side streets hesitated and then gave up trying to be clearly defined highways were clusters of shacks and *acals* in front of which women round meal primitively and cooked over little open fires, and children umbled over nondescript dogs. Two buildings in all the town spired to the dignity of two stories—a hotel that was more than a second-rate boarding-house only during the infrequent periods when court was a session, and a general store with a hall above it for public meetings.

The courthouse stood in the center of things, on an open plaza, an unornamental rec-

tangle of wood. A gallery ran across the front, and as Captain Bill's car came rattling down the grade into town with a choking miss in one cylinder, a tall, coatless man appeared in a doorway and stood for a moment peering intently in the direction of the newcomers, then moved hurriedly down the steps and across the plaza. It was noticeable, as he descended the five or six steps, that he limped slightly, and at the bottom of the flight he paused perceptibly, as though it called for an effort to make the sudden change in direction. Long before he disappeared into a house across the square, however, all traces of lameness had vanished.

"Alfredo," said McMasters. "He goes to prepare a welcome for us, maybe."

"He can prepare anything he likes," Bill growled, "now that this doggoned boat has got us here. If she don't fly to pieces in the next half mile, we're going to make it with just about no time to spare. I'd better be in that courthouse sharp at ten. Drive up right in front. You get busy and see if you can get that engine to hitting on all four. Stick to it until you get it fixed, unless I call you. We might want to go away from here pronto."

It had been a hard and hot morning for Captain Titus and his superintendent. They had allowed ample time for a leisurely arrival not later than nine o'clock, but the car had arranged otherwise by providing two wicked blowouts and finally a stuttering engine that they dared not stop to tinker. They made their goal barely by the skin of their teeth. The hour lacked two minutes of ten when Bill ran up the courthouse steps and disappeared inside the open entrance.

On his right, in the front corner of the building, a door bearing the legend "Sheriff" stood ajar. A hallway ran straight through toward the back; on either side were the rooms of county clerk, assessors and other officers. It took less than a moment to ascertain that all these were empty; county officialdom in Santa Gertrudis, in a dull hot season, evidently did not take its hours of daily labor too seriously. Bill came to the farther end of the hall and opened the door to the courtroom, used between judicial sessions as a meeting-place for the county commissioners. It too was quite deserted. He returned and stood in the doorway of the sheriff's office.

Across from him, against the wall, a roll-top desk with a revolving chair before it stood open, its pigeonholes stuffed with papers, its surface littered. There were two other chairs, and against the wall farthest from the front windows, only a step from the doorway, a flat table, cluttered with out-of-date State reports and other odds and ends of printed matter. Along the wall at the right of the roll-top desk was a row of hooks. On the second hook from the desk hung Sheriff Alfredo's discarded coat, on the one nearer the desk his holstered pistol with its belt of cartridges.

Through the open window came suddenly the sound of an unfamiliar voice. "Mawnin', Mr. McMasters," it drawled. "Pretty warm day to have to monkey with a car's innards. Meet Mr. Delgado—one of my deputies."

Standing well back in the doorway, Bill saw them through the window—the tall, coatless Alfredo Blake and a much smaller man as swarthy as a mulatto—close to the automobile where McMasters was looking up from his activities under the hood. Blake was smiling genially; his deputy, beady eyes intently fixed on the oil superintendent, was smiling not at all. It was observable too, that Mr. Delgado's right hand hovered conveniently close to the grip of the pistol that hung at his thigh.

"Sorry to bother you," the Sheriff went on, still conversationally, "but I've got to see if you are packin' any firearms. There's been a little trouble, one place and another lately, and we're enforcing the pistol-law right sharp. Aint allowing nobody to tote a gun in Zulema that aint got a right to. You might sort o' stick your hands out while Joe looks you over."

His right hand still threateningly near the butt of his gun, Deputy Sheriff Delgado patted McMasters skillfully with his left and produced the automatic that was tucked down inside his trousers. Sheriff Blake grinned as it came into sight.

"Have to put you under arrest," he said very politely. "Enforcin' the law like we been thataway on all the residents of the county, it wouldn't do to let a stranger come in and do what the citizens cain't. (Continued on page 150)



Before he disappeared into a house, all lameness had vanished.

The greatest series of detective-mystery stories since "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes"

The Winds of Death

By E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

Illustrated by W B. King



Sir Norman Greyes

Hunter becomes hunted in this new episode in the pursuit of an arch criminal by a master detective. Sir Norman Greyes, the detective, begins this narrative:

I KNOW nothing of psychology, or any of the mental or nervous phenomena connected with the study of this abstruse subject. What happened to me during the autumn following my visit to Paris remains in my mind unexplained and inexplicable. I shall just set it down, because it becomes a part of the story.

A strong man, in the possession of vigorous health, living an out-of-door life in a quiet country neighborhood, I suddenly became afraid. I had the strongest conviction that some terrible disaster was hanging over me. Every morning, when I took up my gun for a tramp or stepped into my car for any sort of excursion, I felt a chill presentiment of evil. It was not that I lost my nerve. I was still shooting and playing golf as well or better than ever. I drove my car and went about the daily pursuits of life with an even pulse. My fears were not analyzable, and it really seemed as though they reached me through the brain rather than the nerves. I felt evil around me, and I looked always for an enemy. I woke often in the night, and I listened for footsteps, unafraid yet expecting danger. I altered my will and sent it to the lawyer's. Several matters connected with the letting of my farms I cleared up almost hastily with my agent. I was conscious of only one enemy in the world, and it was practically impossible that he should be in England. Yet I expected death.

I was living at the time at Greyes Manor, the small but very pleasant country house which had come to me with my inheritance. My establishment was moderate, even for a bachelor. There was my housekeeper, Mrs. Foulds, who had been in the service of my uncle, an elderly lady of sixty-four who had lived at Greyes all her life, was related to half the farmers in the neighborhood, and was a pleasant, high-principled and altogether estimable person. Adams, her nephew, was my butler and personal servant. There was a boy under him, also of the district, a cook and three maidservants whom I seldom saw.

The only other member of my household was Miss Simpson,

a secretary engaged for me through a well-known office in London, to whom I dictated, for several hours a day, material for the work on crime which I had made up my mind to write, directly I had relinquished my post at Scotland Yard. She was a woman of about fifty years of age, small, with gray hair parted neatly in the middle, the only sister of a clergyman in Cambridgeshire, an agreeable and unobtrusive person, whom I invited to dine downstairs once a week, but whom I otherwise never saw except when engaged upon our work, or in the distance, taking her daily bicycle ride in the park or the lanes around.

Out of doors there was Benjamin Adams, my gamekeeper, the brother of my butler; and Searle, my chauffeur, who came to me from a place in Devonshire with excellent references, a simple-minded and almost overingenious youth. These comprised the little coterie of persons with whom I was brought into contact day by day. Not one of them could possibly have borne me any ill-will; yet I lived among them, waiting for death!

One morning—I remember that it was the first of November—I set out for a long tramp, accompanied only by Adams, the keeper, and a couple of dogs. We were on the boundary of my land, looking for stray pheasants in a large root-field. On my right was a precipitous gorge which extended for about half a mile, thickly planted with small fir trees. I was walking, by arrangement, about twenty yards ahead of Adams, when I was suddenly conscious of a familiar sensation. There was the zip of a bullet singing through the air, a report from somewhere in the gorge, a neat round hole through my felt hat.

"Gawd A'mighty!" yelled Adams. "What be doing?"

I showed him the hole in my hat. He stood with his mouth open, looking at it. There was no further sound from the gorge except the tumbling of the stream down at the bottom. It was an absolutely hopeless place to search.

"We'll be getting home, Adams," I said.

"There be some rascal about, for sure!" the man gasped, gazing fearfully toward the gorge.

"As he can see us," I pointed out, "and we certainly shall never be able to see him, I think we'll make for the road."

Adams complained sometimes of his rheumatism when I walked him too fast, but on this occasion he was a hundred yards ahead of me when we reached the lane. On our homeward way he was voluble.

"There be James Adams, my nephew," he said, "and William Crocombe, who do farm them lands. They be harmless folk, if ever such were. Some lad, I reckon, got hold of a rifle."

"Do either of them take in tourists?" I asked.

Adams was doubtful. That afternoon I motored over to make inquiries. Neither of the farmers accepted tourists; neither of them had seen a stranger about the place; and as regards rifles, the only one I could discover had obviously not been discharged for a year. I drove on to the county police station and left a message for the inspector. He came over to see me that evening, solemn, ponderous and unimpressed.

"I suspect some farmer's lad was out after rabbits, sir," was his decision.

I showed him my hat.

"Farmers' lads," I pointed out, "don't as a rule shoot rabbits with a rifle which carries a bullet that size."

He scratched his head. The matter was certainly puzzling, but apparently without absorbing interest to him.

"Them lads be powerful mischievous!" he sighed.

I dismissed him after the usual refreshments had been proffered and accepted. A few further inquiries which I myself made in the neighborhood led to nothing.

I took my little two-seater out to call on a friend, a few afternoons afterward, and found the steering-gear fallen to pieces before I had gone a mile. I was thrown into a ditch, but escaped without serious injury. I scarcely needed Searle's assurance to convince me that he knew nothing of the matter, but even in its damaged state it was quite obvious that the pins had been willfully withdrawn from the pillar.

THE fact that I was compelled to be a prisoner in the house for several days from an injury to my knee, and worked at unaccustomed hours, was responsible for my accidental discovery of Mrs. Simpson's diary. I came into the room unexpectedly and found her writing. It never occurred to me but that she was engaged upon my work, and so I looked over her shoulder. She was writing in a diary, completing her entry for the day before:

N. G. worked for two hours, practiced golf in park, lunched in, took out two-seater in afternoon. Met with accident but was able to walk home. Said little about his injuries, which were not serious. Accepted invitation shoot Woolhanger Manor next Tuesday at eleven o'clock. Probably return across moor at dusk.

Miss Simpson was suddenly conscious of my presence. She placed her hand over the page.

"This is my private diary, Sir Norman," she asserted.

"So I gathered," I replied. "What is your interest in my doings, Miss Simpson?"

"A personal one," she assured me. "I appeal to you as a gentleman to let me have the volume."

I confess that I was weak. An altercation of any sort whatever, ending, without doubt, in a struggle for the possession of the diary with this quiet-looking, elderly lady, was peculiarly repugnant to me. I rang the bell.

"I shall order the car to take you to Barnstable for the five o'clock train, Miss Simpson," I said.

She rose to her feet, grasping the book firmly.

"What is your complaint against me, Sir Norman?" she asked.

"During this last week," I told her, "two attempts have been made upon my life. I am naturally suspicious of people who keep a close account of my personal movements."

She stood for a moment looking at me through her gold-rimmed spectacles in a dazed, incredulous sort of way. Then she turned and left the room. I never saw her again.

It was that very same afternoon, on my return from the village, where I had gone to mail a letter with my own hands, that I found a gray limousine touring-car, covered with mud, outside my front door, and Adams announced that a gentleman was waiting to see me in the study. To my surprise and infinite satisfaction, it was Rimmington.

"I have this moment posted a letter to you," I said, as we shook hands.

"Anything doing down here?" he asked quickly.

"Too much for my liking," I answered. "What will you have—tea or a whisky and soda?"

He accepted the tea, and ate buttered toast in large quantities.

"I have come straight through from Basingstoke," he explained. "The Chief rather got the wind up about you."

"Tell me all about it," I begged.

"I wish I could," Rimmington replied as he accepted a cigar and lit it. "You read the papers, I suppose?"

"Regularly."

"You've seen what a hell of a time they've been having round New York? Eleven undiscovered murders in ten days, and several million dollars stolen. The New York police have been working steadily for some time, and made their *coup* last week. They made half a dozen arrests, but the head of the gang escaped."

"A known person?" I asked.

"Personally," was the confident reply, "I don't think there is the slightest doubt but that he is the man who has passed at different times as Thomas Pugsley, James Stanfield and originally Michael Sayers. He has vanished from the face of the earth, so far as the New York police have ascertained, but they obtained possession of an uncompleted letter which he must have been typing at the time of the raid. The first page he probably destroyed or took with him. The second page refers to you. Here is a copy."

Rimmington withdrew from his pocketbook a halfsheet of paper and passed it to me. I read it slowly, word for word:

Things here have come to their natural end. The last fortnight has been productive, but there is danger in any further prosecution of our energies. There is only one man who stands in the way of my return to London. You know well of whom I speak. I wait day by day for your news of him, and hope to hear of no more blunders. See that the woman you know of, too, is carefully watched. She may be as loyal as she seems, but there are moments when I have had my doubts. If N. G. can be disposed of—

"Interesting," I remarked, "very! To whom was the letter addressed?"

"To a firm of leather-brokers in Bermondsey," Rimmington replied, "and it was written on the notepaper of a firm of hide-brokers in New York."

"The letter is from our friend, right enough," I decided. "There have been two attempts upon my life within the last two days, and I have just sent away a secretary who was keeping a careful note of my doings."

We talked for an hour or more, and arrived without difficulty at a mutual understanding. Rimmington undertook to send a good man down from Scotland Yard to make inquiries in the neighborhood, and he promised also to trace my late secretary's antecedents through the office from which she had come. In the meantime he begged me to return to London with him. The suggestion was not at first altogether attractive to me.

"I don't like being driven away from my own home," I grumbled. "Besides, there will be nothing for me to do in London at this time of the year."

"Greyes," he said earnestly, "listen to me: You can play golf round London, and get on with your book. You are far safer there than you would be in an unprotected neighborhood like this. But apart from that altogether, we want you up there. This wave of crime in New York had ceased. Paris, too, is quieter. The Chief is profoundly impressed with the belief that it is because operations are being transferred to London. That odd sheet of letter which I have shown you confirms the idea. I am perfectly convinced in my own mind that we are going to be up against it hard within the next few weeks."

"When do you want me to come?" I asked.

"Back with me tonight," he answered promptly. "There is a full moon tonight, and my chauffeur knows every inch of the road. We can leave after dinner and breakfast in London."

"Very well," I agreed. "I will order an early dinner, and we can start directly afterward."

I HAD told Rimmington of all the material things which had happened to me down at Greyes Manor, but I had not spoken of that curious sense of impending evil which had clouded my days, and the prescience of which had been so remarkably verified. We were scarcely crossing the first stretch of Exmoor, however, when the memory of it came back to me, and with the memory an overpowering return of the feeling itself. I filled a pipe, stretched myself out in a corner of the car, and set myself to fight this grim ogre of fear.



"Gawd A'mighty!" yelled Adams, "What be doing?" I showed him the hole in my hat.

It was no easy matter, however. All through the night I was haunted with fancies. The gorse-bushes on the moors seemed like crouching men, the whistle from a distant railway station a warning of impending danger. In a small village before we arrived at Taunton, a man stood in the open doorway of his house, looking out at the night. He scanned us as we passed, and turned away. Through the uncurtained window of his sitting-room I saw a telephone on his table.

At Wiveliscombe, a man with a motorcycle stood silent as we passed. He leaned forward as though to see the number of our car. In ten minutes he raced past us, his powerful engine making the night hideous with its unsilenced explosions. Across Salisbury Plain, as we drew near Stonehenge, a cruelly cold wind was blowing. We drank from a flask which I had brought, and wrapped ourselves up a little closer. At some crossroads, high up in the bleakest part, another car was waiting, its lights out, its appearance sinister. We passed it, however, at fifty miles an hour, and the man who was its sole occupant scarcely looked at us.

We passed through Amesbury, up the long rise to Andover, through Basingstoke, and settled down into a steady fifty miles an hour along wonderful roads. The moon was paling now, and there were signs of dawn; right ahead of us was a thin streak of silver in the clouds, slowly changing to a dull purple. Before we had realized it, we were in the outskirts of London, our pace gradually reduced, but still racing through the somber twilight.

At Isleworth, just as we had passed under the railway arch, I felt the brakes suddenly applied and thrust my head out of the window. We had come almost to a standstill, stopped by a stalwart policeman who, notebook in hand, had been talking to the occupant of a touring-car drawn up by the side of the road. He came up to the open window.

"Are you gentlemen going through to London?" he inquired.

"We are," I told him. "What can we do for you?"

The words had scarcely left my lips when I knew that we were in a trap. I realized it just in time to save my life. I struck with all my force at the ugly little black revolver which was thrust almost into my face. There was a report, a sharp pain at the top of my shoulder, and the revolver itself slipped from the man's crushed fingers. I was within an ace of having him by the throat, but he just eluded me. The touring-car was now passing us slowly, and he leaped into it, leaving his helmet lying in the road. A third man, who seemed to rise up from underneath our car, tore along and jumped in behind, and they sped forward, traveling at a most astonishing pace.

Rimington shouted to our chauffeur through the tube, with the idea of pursuing them. We started forward with a series of horrible bumps, and came almost immediately to a standstill. sprang out. Both our back tires had been stabbed through with some sharp instrument. In the distance, the other car had rounded the corner, and with screaming siren, was racing away for London.

Janet Takes Up the Story

IT was toward the middle of October when I heard from my husband for the first time in many months. For a long time my luck had been atrocious. I lost the greater part of the money paid me for the recovery of Mrs. Trumperton-Smith's diamonds, by an investment in a small millinery business which I discovered, too late, to be already moribund. I had lost post after post for the same maddening reason. My looks had suffered through privation, and my shabby clothes were unbecoming enough; but if I had been Helen of Troy herself, I could scarcely have evoked more proposals of the sort which must bring to an end ordinary relations between employer and employee. My good resolutions began to weaken. I had almost made up my mind to appeal for help in quarters which would necessarily have meant the end of my more or less honest life, when one morning a young man who looked like a bank-clerk was ushered shamelessly by my landlady into my bed-sitting-room. I was folding up a coat which I was going to take to the pawnbroker. I was not in a very pleasant frame of mind, and I was furious with my landlady.

"What do you want?" I asked coldly. "This is not a room in which I can receive visitors."

"My visit is one of business, madam," he answered. "Are you Mrs. Janet Stanfield?"

"I am generally known by that name," I replied.

He opened his pocketbook and counted out two hundred pounds in bank-notes upon the table. I watched him, spellbound.

"With the compliments of the bank manager," he said as he took up his hat and turned away.

"Who sent the notes?" I called out after him. "What bank is it from?"

"The bank of faith, hope and charity," he answered with a smile. "Good morning!"

He was gone before I could get out so much as another word. I took up the notes greedily. I had done my best to live without my husband's help ever since certain news as to his doings in America had reached me. For some reason which I did not myself altogether understand, I had, I thought, cut myself off from any association with him and his friends. Yet in my present straits my attempt at independence seemed hopeless. The money was a necessity to me.

I paid my landlady, and made her a present of my dilapidated wardrobe. I possessed the art of knowing how and where to buy things, and before lunch-time that day I was installed in a small flat in Albemarle Street, wearing clothes which were in keeping with my surroundings, and with an evening dress and cloak in reserve. My neck and throat and fingers were bare, for I had seen nothing of my jewelry since our ill-omened adventure in Paris.

At five minutes to one, however, even this condition was amended. A youth from the hall-porter's office put a package into my hand which had just been left by a messenger. I opened it and found half a dozen familiar morocco cases. A portion of the jewelry, which I had never thought to see again, was in my hands. It was now clear to me that my husband had either already returned or was on the point of doing so, and that my help was needed. Nevertheless three days went by without a sign or message from anybody, three days during which I lived after the fashion of a cat, curled up in warmth and luxury, clinging to the feel of my clothes, reveling in the perfumes of my bath, eating good food and drinking wine with slow but careful appreciation. I felt the life revive in me, the blood flow once more through my veins. During those three days nothing in this world would have driven me back to my poverty. I would have committed almost any crime rather than return to it.

ON the fourth day I met Norman Greyes. I was leaving a hairdresser's in Curzon Street when he rounded the corner of Clarges Street, carrying a bag of golf-clubs and evidently looking for a taxicab. I was within a foot or two of him before he recognized me. I was conscious of a keen and peculiar thrill of pleasure as I saw something flash into his stern, unimpressive face. Enemies though we were, he was glad to see me. "Good morning, Sir Norman," I said, holding out my hand. "Are there no more criminals left in the world, that you take holiday?"

He smiled, and put his clubs through the open window of a taxicab which had just drawn up by the side of the curb.

"I am tired of hunting criminals," he confessed. "Besides, they are turning the tables. They are hunting me."

"Indeed?" I answered. "That sounds as though my husband were coming back."

"There are rumors of it," he admitted. "Are you staying near here?"

"I am living at the Albemarle Court," I told him. "Why not have me watched? If he does come back, I am sure I am one of the first people he would want to visit."

"It is a wonderful idea," he agreed, with a peculiar gleam in his keen gray eyes. "I would rather bribe you, though, to give him up."

"How much?" I asked. "He has treated me very badly lately."

"Dine with me tonight," he suggested, "and we will discuss it."

I am convinced that Norman Greyes is my enemy, as he is Michael's, and that I hate him. Nevertheless he has a power over me to which I shall never yield but which I cannot explain or analyze. At the thought of dining alone with him, I felt a little shiver run through my body. He stood looking down at me, smiling as he waited for my answer.

"I shall be charmed," I assented boldly.

"At my rooms," he suggested, "—Number Thirteen. About eight o'clock?"

"Why not at a restaurant?" I asked.

"Out of consideration for you," he replied promptly. "You are probably more or less watched, and your movements reported to the organization of which your husband is the chief. If you are seen dining alone with me in a public place, they may imagine that you have come over to the enemy."

"You are most thoughtful," I replied, with all the sarcasm in my tone which I could command. "I will come to your rooms, then."

HE nodded pleasantly, raised his cap and stepped into the taxicab. I watched him a moment, hating him because he seemed the one person who had the power to ruffle me. He was dressed just as I like to see men dressed, in gray tweed, loose but well-fitting. He wore a soft collar, and the tie of a famous cricket club. His tweed cap was set just at the right angle. He moved with the light ease of an athlete. I hated his shrewd, kindly smile, the clearness of his bronzed complexion, the little humorous lines about his eyes. I went straight back to my rooms and wrote him a few impulsive lines. I wrote to say that I would dine with him at any restaurant he liked, but not in Clarges Street, and that he could call for me at eight o'clock.

At half-past three that afternoon I received the invitation which I had been expecting, and at four o'clock I stepped out of a taxicab and entered the offices of a firm of solicitors situated in a quiet square near Lincoln's Inn. An office-boy rose up from behind a worm-eaten desk and invited me to seat myself on a hard wooden chair while he disappeared in search of Mr. Younghusband, the principal partner in the firm. The office was decorated by rows of musty files, and a line of bills containing particulars of property sales, the solicitor in each case being the firm of Younghusband, Nicholson and Younghusband. After a few minutes' delay, the boy summoned me and held open a door on the other side of the passage.

"Mr. Younghusband will see you, madam," he announced.

The door was closed behind me, and I shook hands with a tall, elderly man who rose to welcome me in somewhat abstracted fashion. He was untidily but professionally dressed. He wore old-fashioned steel-rimmed spectacles, reposing at the present moment on his forehead. The shape of his collar and the fashion of his tie belonged to a bygone generation. There were rows of tin boxes extending to the ceiling, a library of law-books, and his table was littered with papers. He reseated himself as soon as I had accepted his proffered chair, pushed a thick parchment deed on one side, crossed his legs and looked at me steadily.

"Mrs.—er—Morrison?" he began, using the name by which I had been known during the last few months.

"That is more or less my name," I admitted. "I received a telephone message asking me to call this afternoon."

"Quite so, quite so," he murmured a little vaguely. "Now let me see," he went on, looking among some papers. "Your husband appears to have been a client of the firm for many years, but my memory—oh, here we are," he broke off, drawing a slip of paper toward him. "My instructions, cabled from New York, were to hand you the sum of two hundred pounds. You received that amount, I believe?"

"I received it and have spent the greater part of it," I replied. His expression became a little less benign.

"Dear me!" he exclaimed. "That sounds rather extravagant."



"Capital!" he replied. "You see no resemblance to Mr. James Stanfield?"

"I have been without any means of support for many months," I told him.

He scratched his upper lip thoughtfully.

"Your husband has, I gather, been engaged in operations in New York of a delicate nature. The world of finance has always its secrets. He appears now, however, to have brought his operations to a close. You are aware, perhaps, that he has landed in England?"

My heart gave a little jump. I could not tell whether the sensation I experienced had more in it of joy or of fear.

"Is he safe?" I asked.

"Safe?" Mr. Younghusband repeated a little vaguely. "Why not?"

There was a moment's silence. I looked around at the shabby but imposing contents of the office, at the lawyer's mildly puzzled expression. I drank in the whole atmosphere of the place, and I was dumb. Mr. Younghusband suddenly smiled, and tapped

with his forefinger upon the table. He was like a man who has suddenly seen through a faulty phrase in some legal document.

"I apprehend you," he said. "For a moment I was not altogether able to appreciate the significance of your question. New York is a curious place, and I understand—er—that the financial operations in which your husband has been concerned, although profitable, may have made him enemies. He traveled back to England, indeed, under an assumed name. Let me see—I have it somewhere," he went on, fumbling once more among a mass of papers. "I had it in my hand only a few minutes ago. . . . Here we are—Mr. Richard Peters. I am instructed to say, madam, that your husband would welcome a call from you."

"You have his address?"

For the moment Mr. Younghusband looked vague again. Then, with a little smile of triumph, he turned over the slip of paper which he held in his hand.

"Yes—his address," he repeated. (Continued on page 148)

Have you ever wondered what is uppermost in the mind of the girl who serves you in one of our great stores? The thoughts of one such girl are disclosed here



"I don't want any, Mother. I'm going out to supper with— with a friend of May Griswold's."

IN the long room, between the lockers and the washbowls, seven girls were discussing a customer of the store.

"Style!" cried the girl with the lacquered nails. "Why, she's got more style than you ever seen before, Sadie Hempel! Of course, maybe it aint the kind you're used to. Nothing screaming about it, and you have to know somethin' about good dressing before you know how well dressed Alexa Sturtevant is. But take it from me, Sadie, there aint a woman walks in this store with the class Miss Sturtevant has."

"You said the right word there!"—another girl farther along the row. "It's class Alexa Sturtevant has, just pure class."

"Yes, I know. But it's style too. Her clothes are all French, but they aint the French kind that are copied over on Broadway. They're awful quiet,—that's why Sadie don't get 'em,—but oh, dearies, they have the lines!"

"But it's more than lines," the second girl persisted. "It's the way she wears 'em, the way she walks and speaks and everything. Why, when she comes up to a counter, it's just as if the other women was a mob, if you get what I mean. It's funny, too, for she isn't exactly pretty—"

"No, she isn't pretty," chimed in a young blue-eyed girl, "but she's got a lovely way of speaking—"

"I read a piece in the paper last month about her family," said a girl who was hastily changing her black serge store frock for a blue serge suit, "and it said they was one of the oldest families in this country, and that her great-grandfather was a general

or something in the Revolutionary War, and that her grandfather was—"

"There, what did I say!" The second girl was triumphant. "Didn't I tell you it is something more than style? You can't be like that unless you've got—unless you are—"

She hesitated, struggling for a word. Instinctively she knew that "class" had already been overused. And besides, it did not quite express that elusive quality they were all trying to define. But while she was groping through her scanty vocabulary, the girl in front of the last washbowl at the end of the room produced the simple words: "*A lady!*"

They accepted the word with relief and approval, although they would have hesitated to use it, sensing its threadbareness on their

A Certain Something

A Story of the Girl



ARTHUR WILLIAM BROWN—

By GRACE SARTWELL MASON

Who Waits on You

own lips. For too many times had they hurled over a haughty shoulder: "I want you to understand I'm a lady!" Thus used, the word had a legitimate and valuable place in their vocabulary. But subconsciously they knew there was another use of the word. It meant something delicate and sterling—something some of them recognized in those rare moments when they met it, and wondered about—something you could not buy in any store in the world. It belonged to this woman they were discussing. With approval they metaphorically laid it at her feet, and felt that it was the perfect tribute.

But the girl who had produced the word stood still in front of the mirror, thinking. In it she met her own eyes. An instant before, they had been bright with excitement, the pupils very

large and black. Now they relaxed a little, dreamily. What was a lady? If having an ancestor in the Revolution did it, then she was one. Aunt Emmie had a book with the whole Barrows family in it. But how could you be when you lived in Harlem and your father

had to wash every night with yellow laundry soap to get the machine-grease off his arms?

She gave her shoulders a shake of impatience. After all, it didn't matter. Things were as they were, and you couldn't change them. She had never thought about it before, but tonight when the girls began to discuss Miss Sturtevant, she had suddenly ached with a new longing. Wouldn't it be wonderful just for one evening, to look like Alexa Sturtevant? To have her clothes, her way of carrying her head, her air of being at ease, and friendly, and just somehow—somehow *right*!

There was a very special reason why she wished this tonight. At thought of the reason, the wide-pupiled excitement returned to her eyes. She darted a sidewise glance at the other girls as

she hurriedly dried her hands. What would they say if they knew what she was going to do tonight—if they knew that she was going to have dinner with Mr. Holbrook Burke? An astonished hush would fall upon them; and then they would gather about her, twittering, envious and curious.

For some of them knew him by sight and reputation, the girls at the glove-counter especially—a rich little man, beginning to be tubby, with thick silvery hair, a benevolent, watchful smile. How utterly astonished they would be if they knew that among them all he had noticed *her*. For she was not pretty in the luscious way of Sadie Hempel. She was slender and graceful, and she had a certain way with her clothes, a sort of genius for simplicity that made her stand out among the rest of them. But there were several prettier girls powdering their noses alongside her at that moment.

STOOPING toward the mirror, she anxiously examined an imaginary blemish on her smooth white skin. There was a queer fluttering in her throat. It seemed as if the girls would never get on their hats and go. She wanted to be among the last to leave the store tonight. Rodney Joyce wouldn't be likely to wait for her if she were late; and while, of course, she would not in the least mind telling him about her dinner engagement with Mr. Burke, it would take some explaining. It would be a bother, and she wanted to get home quickly, so as to have plenty of time to dress.

But the instant she stepped outside the employees' door, she saw that this was one of the nights when Rodney had waited.

"Hello, Rod!" She smiled at him faintly, and shifted the hat-box she was carrying to the side away from him.

But she need not have troubled, for he was not very observant of details tonight. The instant he fell into step with her, it was plain that he was so suffused by a large sense of well-being that he walked in a golden haze. His smile became wider and more boyish; the blue of his eyes deepened.

"Gee, I thought I'd missed you, Lil! Got off early today. But I waited because I wanted to tell you something."

At this point they reached the curb, which gave him an excuse to take her arm. He bent his athletic young body a little in an unconscious curve of protection as he guided her through the traffic, and he looked down at her tenderly. When they reached the other side, he still held her arm as they jammed their way down the subway stairs.

His touch made her feel irritable, and she wanted to get away from it—which was odd, for she had been for a long time more than a little in love with Rodney Joyce. Their families had been neighbors for years, almost as if they lived in a country town, instead of in the brick-and-mortar wilderness which was Harlem. Their mothers exchanged recipes and apron-patterns, and there was a secret hope between them that Rod and Lily would marry some day and take a flat near them.

Lily and Rod were perfectly well aware of this hope. It was in their eyes often when they "jollied" each other, keeping up their long game of being merely good pals. They were more practical than their mothers, they believed. Their demands of life were higher and more complicated. Rod often said he wouldn't have the nerve to ask any girl to start housekeeping the way his mother had. And Lily had grown through the romantic recklessness of twenty. She was twenty-four, and she looked about her. She knew that Rod was right. He ought to be getting a good salary, and have "prospects," before they ventured on that road of many turnings.

But all the same her feeling for him went deep. It had grown beyond the first feverish stage of being in love and had become something tranquil and tender, a part of her, without which she could not imagine life. They had always had such good times together. They understood each other.

At least they always had until now. But the trouble now, Lily thought, was that she didn't understand herself. Why, for instance, didn't she tell him, while they were going down the subway stairs, that she was going to have dinner with Mr. Burke?

To be sure, Rod wasn't giving her time. He was clutching her arm and shouting in her ear above the din of an incoming train.

"Say, Lil, what do you think? You know the Crescent Electric Company—you know I told you about a member of the firm nosing around the store last week, and he talked with me, and he came back again yesterday? Well, he sent word today to come around and see him after we close Saturday! What do you think of that?"

Instantly she forgot herself. Her eyes sparkled happily. "Oh,

Rod! I'll bet they're going to offer you that position you wanted!"

"I shouldn't wonder. I heard yesterday there is going to be an opening with them soon. It sounds as if it is exactly what I've been looking for. You see, it's like this: they want a fellow that knows dynamos where they live, and that's me. If I can get a start with a company like the Crescent—"

Their train came in with shriekings and thunder. Wedged in the crowd, they began to push slowly toward the doors. But Rodney suddenly turned an inspired face toward her.

"Let's not go home just yet! Let's go over to the Chop Suey Garden and have supper and go home when the trains are empty. You can telephone your mother. What do you say?"

She shook her head and pushed on.

"Oh, come on, Lily! Be a sport! It's cool up at the gardens. We haven't been there for a long time. Come on—"

"I can't, Rodney!" she cried nervously. "I mustn't miss this train. I'm going out to supper."

With disappointment written large in his face, he was obliged to follow her into the packed train. For a moment or two they were separated, but he managed finally to get hold of the strap next to hers.

It was this separation that gave her a chance to see how difficult it was going to be to explain about Mr. Burke. For the first thing Rodney would say would be: "Who introduced him?" And the fact of the matter was, they had never been actually introduced.

May Griswold, at the men's glove-counter, had called out to her one day: "Say, Lily, you know the little round gent'man with the gray hair and the smile—the one that buys all those white gloves for his sister? 'Sister,' y-e-s! I don't think! Anyway, he says you've got the prettiest way of walking of any girl in this store."

"Umph! Thank him to keep his remarks to himself!" Lily shot back.

But when you've been told you have a pretty walk and you know there's a bit of truth in it, and you come out one summer afternoon to find the person who made the remark just getting out of his car at the curb near the employees' exit, the most natural thing in the world is to feel self-conscious. She had meant to look forbidding, but the corners of her lips had crinkled. And Mr. Holbrook Burke had at once swept off his hat with a benevolent gayety.

"How is our friend Miss Griswold? I was in the shop today, but I didn't see her. Not ill, is she? And how are you, this stuffy day?"

His conversation had flown around her like sticky fly-paper. Before she quite knew how it came about, she was stepping into the car to be driven to the subway station. Nothing in that! Only—how could she explain to Rodney the two subsequent rides? Not to the subway, but through the Park, just to give her a lift home. It had come about so casually, so naturally. But she knew what Rodney would say:

"Oh-ho! Picked you up, did he, the old geezer!"

And it hadn't been that way at all.

"Going to be home tonight?" asked Rodney as they swayed around a curve. "Thought I'd fix up that push-button for your mother."

"I—I don't know what time I'll be back. Probably not before nine. You'd better come tomorrow night."

She was immensely relieved when he assented and began to explain to her the history of the Crescent Electric Company. He was taking it for granted she was going to have supper with one of the girls. She meant never to lie to Rodney, no matter what came up.

WHEN Lily opened the kitchen door, her mother was at the stove, fork in hand. Her father was lathering his arms and hands at the laundry tub, and the room was full of the smell of yellow soap and frying liver and bacon. Aunt Emmie was slicing bread. She said: "Lo, Lily!" without looking around.

But Kitty, the sixteen-year-old, languidly conveying a dish of boiled potatoes toward the dining-room, stopped short and shrieked:

"What you got, Lil? A new hat for me? Oh, I need—"

"Not for you, kitten. Keep off! It's a hat for myself. Been having a sale in the millinery. No, wait! I'll put it on later."

"Well, you'll have to hurry, Lily," said her mother. Her face was unsmiling, but her eyes were full of love. "Supper is most ready."

"I don't want any, Mother. I'm going out to supper with—with a friend of May Griswold's."

Then she went hastily across the dining-room to the door of her bedroom. But her mother, fork in hand, followed and called out: "Where you going to have supper, Lily?"

Lily felt a flare of fierce impatience. Couldn't a girl of twenty-four who earned a salary and paid board to her mother every week, have any life of her own?

"How should I know! Some place downtown, probably."

"Very well!" returned her mother patiently, and went back to her frying.

Lily closed the door of the cubicle that was her own, and tore off her jacket and hat. Forty minutes to make the most important toilet of her life! The pupils of her gray eyes were wide and bright. As she dressed, she could hear them all talking above the clatter of knives and forks. Incredible that only a thin partition separated her from them, when a whole world seemed all at once to have rolled between them. A faint sense of oppression swept over her—the oppression of her own strangeness to herself.

But when she took the new hat out of its wrappings with the tender gesture a girl reserves only for a new hat, she was radiant. She pulled it carefully down over her hair, a dark blue hat to match her dress, with a gardenia over one ear, in the mode of the moment. She tried the effect of putting her head on one side and smiling mysteriously. Then the smile became real and rueful.

"No hat will ever make you exactly pretty, Lily," she thought. "But you've got something—something—"

If she had put a word to it, it would have been the girls' favorite *class*, and if she had analyzed it, she would have laid it to the fact that she was all American. No East Side blood there to make her fat or under height. Her lines were all slim and light and long, her color clear white. But one beautiful thing about her was her eyes, especially when the pupils were distended and brilliant as they were now. They suggested spirit and temperament. Perhaps their intensity was what had attracted Holbrook Burke.

When she stepped into the dining-room, pulling on her long

fitter in a French dressmaking house, and she knew lines; so when she admonished Lily to "pull it down farther on the left," Lily did so, stooping to see herself in the sideboard mirror, over the pressed glass pickle dish and the punch-bowl her mother had got with trading stamps years before.

As soon as she saw Mr. Burke waiting for her in the tapestried lobby of the restaurant, happiness flamed up in her anew. Mr. Burke wore a dinner coat, just as if, she told herself, she were one of his society friends. And she was grateful to him for choosing this celebrated restaurant, which she had never seen, except through the lace of its wide windows. The fact that it was August, and Mr. Burke's friends were not likely to be dining there, did not occur to her, to poison her pleasure in the music, the service, the exquisite food.

Mr. Burke's manner toward her, the dinner, everything, was so perfect that she wished when it was all over she could slip into the subway and go home alone, dreaming about it. But when they appeared at the door, Mr. Burke's motor rolled up, the chauffeur sprang to open the door and Mr. Burke waved her genially inside.

As they rolled through the silent Park, he leaned back against the deep cushions, his dapper fingers clasped over the rotundity of his waistcoat, on his lips a smile that would have been called benevolent if one did not look at his eyes. They were as cold as a cat's.

"Take off your hat and make yourself comfortable, child," said Mr. Burke.

Calling her "child" made her feel that it would be silly to refuse so paternal a tone. So she took off the new hat, and Mr. Burke stroked her hair lightly.

Lily's heart thumped uncomfortably. There was a vague confusion and constraint in her mind. She did not know quite what to do. If it had been Rodney, she would have said cheerfully: "Stop it, Rod. I hate being pawed!" And Rodney would have grinned and stopped.

But Mr. Burke was different. One read about him in the papers—he had a country estate and he belonged to clubs. But

there was something else about him, a veiled insolence, an assurance and smoothness that made her feel helpless—and a way of watching her, and all the time smiling. She did not quite like him.

But she liked the flutter of excitement that was left over from the brilliant restaurant, and she liked the luxury of slipping soundlessly through the Park like this, on fawn-colored cushions, with the lamps over the roadway flashing in upon the silver fittings that had been designed for Mr. Burke's comfort. Her mind was a kaleidoscope of varicolored impressions: a gown she had seen in the restaurant, the sheen of white satin damask with the petals of roses falling on it, the smooth, yellow-white flesh of Mr.

Burke's hand, the richly tinted decorations of the great dining-room.

"I could look as well as any of those women, if I had their money," she thought.

Mr. Burke laid his thick arm lightly over her unresponsive shoulders. Then he took it away again. His secret smile was puzzled, amused, a shade annoyed. But when at the northern end of the Park she asked him to let her walk home from there, his tone was urbane.

"Nice of you to help a lonely man (Continued on page 94)



white gloves, her mother and Aunt Emmie and Kitty laid down their knives and forks to regard her critically.

"Some hat!" cried Kitty.

Aunt Emmie's eyes were bright and cryptic above her thin cheeks. "I guess May Griswold's friend will like it," she chuckled.

Lily looked startled, but she did not retort. One seldom knew what Aunt Emmie really meant, and never what she was thinking. She had had an early and unhappy romance that had left her rather curdled. Her intuitions were uncanny. But she was a

*The story of Gusthaven, who
feared not man, God nor devil,
yet stole cookies for his dog*

WE were sitting in Al Spade's cabin after supper that night, I remember. There were Al,—with his shoes off and his wool-socked feet propped up on the foot of his bunk,—Charley Kangas, Pete, Butch Somers and I. We had put in a hard shift at the New Albion, and a big supper lay heavy against the ribs of us. We weren't doing much talking.

Al sucked on that snoring pipe of his; Butch read the *Irish World*; Pete and Charley sat and (presumably) thought. Twilight was deepening; through the open doorway we could see the gold-purple of Galway Mountain across the cañon, under the dying sun. At her boarding-house fifty yards down the trail Mrs. Latzkar was calling the children with intermittent shrill wails.

Frank Gusthaven's black wolf-dog Kris was dozing near the stove. Frank had gone up the hill with the night shift a couple of hours before, and I suppose the dog was lonely. It was Frank Gusthaven who had announced one night, in the course of a discussion of religion and the Irish question, that he didn't fear God, man or devil. And it was Frank whom I saw one other night at the boarding-house craftily pocket a sugared cookie to give the dog after dinner.

Suddenly Kris sat up, ears erect, eyes wide and glittering, wet black muzzle quiver. There was no sound outside in the mountain wilderness, save the far hissing of the wind as it drove through the pines up Hellmouth Cañon. We listened, glanced out of the door.

"Guess maybe he smells a pack-rat somewhere," Al Spade ventured, and sank back into silence.

Five or ten minutes passed, and then we heard footsteps scrambling down the New Albion trail—footsteps, and rolling, rattling pebbles, and lastly the heavy breathing of a man in a hurry.

Ole Pedersen's gaunt frame showed in the doorway.

"Vell, Al," he said in labored breaths, "guess man vos kilt up in de mine. Fall of rock."

We jumped to our feet and all but knocked Pedersen over in our stampede for the door. As we settled to the climb of that



One Minute on the 600

By REUBEN H. MAURY

Illustrated by Audubon Taylor

ungodly trail, he called back something about going to Yogo for the doctor. The *scratch-scratch* of Butch's hobnails on the rocks, Pete's muttered Slavic curses, my heart knocking like a jackhammer in my chest, as we swung up toward the looming sky on the trail's terrific grade—I can call back the sensations now as I write.

"In the midst of life we are in death." . . . I remember the thought came to me that when the prophet uttered the words he must have been thinking of the mines. A man goes aboard the cage at the shift's beginning; he sinks away at the end of a thin wire cable into black caverns; nor does he know whether, when the eight hours below are done, he will return to sun and wind and blue sky a living being still, or a thing to be relegated to the dust as quickly as may be.

We made the mine dump at the end of the climb with bulging

THE GOLDEN RULE OF HEALTH—EAT SOUP DAILY

Here is a game the kids acclaim
 With vigor, vim and zest.
 Their pep and force derived, of course,
 From "Ox Tail" at its best.



—and thereby hangs a tale

Campbell's is Ox Tail Soup at its best. Not merely a deliciously satisfying food, but a recognized health-builder as well. It brings you, in a tasty dish, the native vigor of meaty, marrowy ox joints; the beneficial properties of fresh vegetables and herbs; the strength-building qualities of barley.

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A rich, nourishing stock made from medium-sized ox tails, combined with diced Chantenay carrots and golden turnips, tomato puree, sliced Ox Tail Joints, celery, parsley, barley, a little leek, and a touch of flavoring to bring out the natural savor of this delicious combination. Order Ox Tail today.

21 kinds

12 cents a can

Campbell's SOUPS

LOOK FOR THE RED AND WHITE LABEL

eyes and chests heaving. A little group of surface men was gathered near the shaft-head, and on a rough pile of coats and shirts lay Martin Dunleavy, Gusthaven's partner on the night-shift below. The sweat was breaking out on his forehead in great fat drops, and through clenched teeth he was saying "Oh, God!" over and over. They had cut away the overalls from his right leg, and it lay bound in a strip from Spike McCarthy's shirt, slowly staining a dark red.

Well, I have pieced the story together, from what Dunleavy told, and from comments by Con Bruin, the shift-boss, and from what I knew of Frank Gusthaven—who feared not God, man nor devil, yet stole cookies for his dog. Weighing it all in the balance, I think he stands justified before the gods of life for what he did in that one minute on the six-hundred-foot level in the New Albion mine.

GUSTHAVEN and Dunleavy worked in the New Albion as partners for six months. They had never met before then. But they took to each other from the start, the little leather-necked Irishman and the roaring blonde Norwegian, when they came together that day at the mining-camp below the copper diggings. Together they struck the company for a job, and having got it, hammered a tight little log shack into shape for the coming winter.

Gusthaven quickly became an outstanding figure among the thirty-odd men of the Captain Creek settlement. He had been close to the championship of the Pine Tree division heavyweights overseas, and though he had a giant's strength, he forbore to use it. Thirty-five years old, he was in manhood's prime, weighing stripped an even two hundred, big-chested, lithe as a tiger, for all his size.

With that flaming hair and full-blooded face, and the sea-blue eyes, he was a gallant figure of a man with a flavor of the old Vikings about him—you've seen such men.

And because he sought nobody's friendship, all of us sought his. He was so easy-going, yet such a terrible fighter, as he showed that time Bull Storms hit the boarding-house-keeper's ten-year-old lad for throwing a snowball at him. And scornful as he was of work, he could set up timbers or muck out rock with any two of the rest of us. Such an all-around man, in a big, rough way he was; but when that wolf-dog of his, Kris, took the distemper, Frank laid off two shifts to doctor him. . . .

Gusthaven and Dunleavy had gone up that afternoon for the night-shift. They rode the cage down to the six-hundred level, and stepped out into the station, where a single electric bulb cast a sharp glare over rough squared timbers and stacked tools, and an air-compressor chug-chugged the life-stream through the long pipes that faded away overhead into the recesses of the mine. Ahead of them gloomed the main tunnel, in whose black belly lay Crosscut Number Three, where they were working.

They had been running a drift both ways at the end of the cut for the last four or five days. Con Bruin, the shift-boss, had instructed them to go on with that work: the New Albion manager had hopes of locating a new ore body in there.

So they went in from the station, down the long tunnel, between the ore-car tracks, clumping along on boards which sucked and trembled underfoot in the seepage from the rocks. Their carbide lamps, hung on their caps, threw ahead a weird light on wall and rock and timber. Finally they reached the crosscut.

"This ought to be timbered," Gusthaven said critically as they turned into the jagged offshoot from the main tunnel. "She's ten yards long, at least."

"Oh, don't worry yourself," Dunleavy returned sourly; "they'll timber her when they get good and ready."

They jabbed their spiked lamps into the wall of the cut, carefully deposited the bucket of drinking-water under a jutting rock and sat down on spread slickers to "take five."*

The drift at the end of the crosscut was at right angles to the cut, and as they were working both ways, the entire job formed a T, with its base leading into the main tunnel. Gusthaven worked at one end of the horn and Dunleavy at the other. The rock was comparatively soft, and they were not to blast until it hardened.

Presently they fell to work. They had wheelbarrows to fill at the face of their diggings, and trundle out to a car waiting on the siding in the main tunnel. In the green glare of the carbide lamps, pick and shovel ringing and scraping, Gusthaven quickly filled his wheelbarrow and ran it out to the car. As he

rounded the bend on the return trip he saw Dunleavy swinging his pick against the yielding rock.

"Get a move on, there, cocky!" he roared, and laughing, proceeded to fill his second load.

He felt uncommonly fine tonight, even for him; so presently he lifted his voice in song—an old-time tune he had picked up God knows where:

Oh, Jesse James was a lad; he killed many a man,
And robbed the Glendale train—
But that dirty little coward who shot Mr. Howard
Has laid poor Jesse in his grave.

"For God's sake!" yelled Martin Dunleavy ten yards away. "Have a heart."

Gusthaven laughed at him, and sang again as he fought the clutting rocks with his weapons of peaceful conquest:

Poor Jesse had a wife, to mourn for his life,
Three children—and they were brave;
But that dirty little coward who shot Mr. Howard
Has laid poor Jesse in his grave.

As Gusthaven ran his empty wheelbarrow back from the car in the tunnel for the third time, he glanced up at the roof of the untimbered cut. There was a faint light from the lamps in the drift, and he saw in the glow what held him for the moment—paralyzed. Four feet from the junction of drift and cut, and slowly widening, was a crack in the gray-green rock. As his staring eyes watched it in those first seconds of utter terror, the gap widened from a half-inch to three-quarters, and lengthened from a foot to two.

Language is too cumbrous, and our brains, under stress, too swift in acting, to tell all that raced through the Northman's mind as he gazed at that widening crack.

A slide of rock was inevitable. It was perhaps sixty seconds away! His mind grasped the unit of time desperately. One minute! Dunleavy was in the drift on the other side of the crack. Those were his first thoughts. The *ring-ring* of Dunleavy's pick came out to him as across endless distances—*ring-ring, ring-ring*. And the music hypnotized him for a few seconds.

Again his racing brain took up its course. Dunleavy inside, himself outside. He could jump and run and be safe; nobody would blame him. Dunleavy'd be killed—crushed, or smothered behind the wall of fallen rock. Smothered in the drift! He, Frank Gusthaven, could go out to the world again. He could see old Kris, his dog, dear old Kris, black and long-haired and loving. And all the brightness of the world and its long trails winding; it would be his again. There was time to run—thirty-five seconds—

THE crack was spreading—spreading; this was going to be a big fall. Life was good.

Dunleavy stopped picking in the drift. In a moment he'd begin to shovel rock into his wheelbarrow. The cutting off of the *ring-ring* released Gusthaven's tongue. He tried to shout, but the tension in his throat held his voice down to a dry whisper.

And the battle went ahead in his brain. This partner of his—square fellow—he didn't know a slide was coming. Not a chance for both of them, to get out alive!

Still time to run. Twenty-five seconds, anyway. He clapped a hard hand to his chin, jerked it away, flung himself around in a wild glance toward the main tunnel, clenched his fists till the knuckles cracked, gazed hypnotized at the ever-spreading crack in the top of the cut. Twenty seconds . . . eighteen!

"To hell with it!" roared Frank Gusthaven, and lunged into the drift. Dunleavy's light smote his eyeballs with a blinding glare. He dived for his partner, caught him around the waist, swung him off his feet, and turned. Slipping and stumbling on the loose rock beneath him, Frank Gusthaven bore Martin Dunleavy to the head of the cut. Two seconds were left, perhaps. They might make it together, after all.

A falling rock struck him on the shoulder. It had come, then. He hurled his partner out and away, putting his whole weight and muscle into the heave, as the rocks began now to hail down upon him. They were coming from everywhere. The lamps were out; he, he thought grimly, was going out too, like a lamp. He crouched for a long leap through the storm of boulders. And then a rock world, with a tearing roar, pulled away and came down upon Frank Gusthaven. The minute had passed.

I have thought it was at this instant that the black wolf-dog Kris, down in Al Spade's cabin, sat up with ears erect, eyes wide and glittering, and wet black muzzle a quiver.

* This term means to take a rest. It is said to have originated in the Butte, Montana, copper mines; but its use has spread throughout the Western camps.—AUTHOR.



*In her face—the charm
he seeks to find*

Nothing quite effaces that momentary disappointment

INSTINCTIVELY—perhaps without even stating it to himself—a man expects to find daintiness, charm, refinement in the women he knows.

And when some unpleasant little detail mars this conception of what a woman should be—nothing quite effaces his involuntary disappointment.

Don't let a neglected condition of your skin give an impression of untidiness in your toilet. Any girl can have a smooth, clear skin, free from little defects and blemishes. Each day your skin is changing—old skin dies, and new takes its place. By giving this *new skin* the right care, you can keep it flawlessly smooth and clear.

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A CERTAIN SOMETHING

(Continued from page 89)

through this hot evening, little girl," he said. "We must have another dinner. Must get you out in the country air, eh? We'll motor up the river some night soon, shall we?"

There flashed through her mind a picture of the yellow windows of inns, of dancing on wide verandas. She felt suddenly hungry for more. She murmured her thanks and slipped away toward home.

She lay awake for some time after she had gone to bed, going over everything she had seen, every word Mr. Burke had said. It was hard to recall his exact words or expression, because her mind was ashimmer with the brightness of her memories.

"He must like me," she told herself. "A man like that wouldn't pay so much attention to a girl like me if he didn't really like her. It isn't as if I was pretty. Then he'd take me because he would like to be seen with me. . . . I wonder what it would seem like to be married to Mr. Burke."

She went to sleep with this wonder, this shimmer of excitement in her brain. But just at dawn she awoke. Her mind took up again the wonder on which she had dropped asleep. But now the shimmer was gone. Her mind was clear. And it was an intelligent mind, sharpened by several years of earning her own living, of contact with other girls whose shrewdness had been gained in a hard and disillusioning school.

And in this moment, at four in the morning, Lily Barrows didn't fool herself. She knew Holbrook Burke's type; she had seen it often enough in the store, cold-eyed, self-indulgent and covetous, buying things for little fools of girls. But to think that she, Lily Barrows, who had always held her head rather proudly, should even for one evening have fooled herself!

In the morning she felt languid and depressed. In her lunch-hour she sent a note down to the electricians' room: "Roddy: Come up to the house to supper tonight. Meet me at the south exit to avoid the crowd."

The thought of Rodney was a refuge, a drink of cold water in a feverish mouth.

AFTER that, Lily took to leaving the store by the south exit. She was turning her back on temptation. But what puzzled her was that she got no especial peace or happiness out of it. She had been taught that if you were good, you were happy. She wasn't. What she felt was an angry dejection, a sense of frustration.

One day Mr. Burke appeared suddenly at the glove-counter. She turned around from putting away a box of gloves, and there was his benignant, half-moon smile across the counter.

His urbane voice said: "How are you today, Miss Lily?"

"Very well, thank you," she managed to murmur.

He lowered his voice. "How about a

little drive and dinner up the river this evening?"

"Oh, thank you, but I—I can't—not tonight."

"Nonsense! It's going to be a gorgeous evening, moon and everything. Where shall I meet you?"

"I can't, really. I mustn't. Not—not tonight."

"I see—another date. Too bad. But look here, will you call me up the first evening when you can go? Wait—I'll write down the number."

"No—no!" she protested faintly. But he had turned away, sliding a slip of paper across the counter toward her. Her hand closed automatically over it.

She folded the slip of paper small and tucked it into her bodice. That night she angrily tore it up into minute scraps. "He needn't think I'll ever call him up," she said to her mirror.

But the number remained printed on her brain. And what it stood for made a place for itself in her consciousness, something secret and nagging, a promise and a fear, a beguilement and a torment.

ONE afternoon she came out of the shop, hesitated an instant and then turned away from the subway and walked toward Fifth Avenue. It had been an intolerable day, hot and monotonous. She longed for green trees and shade, and she meant to walk a little in the Park. In the open space in front of the Plaza she slackened her pace to look about her. In spite of the heat there was still gayety in the jaded town, in the motorcars wheeling into the Park, in the brilliant evening sky, in the voices of women alighting from motors for tea at the Plaza. Through the open windows of the hotel she could hear the lilt of the orchestra. And from the moving crowds there seemed to emanate an electric invitation, suggestion—something that made her feel as the music did, excited and eager and sorry for herself.

She stood for a moment or two motionless beside the fountain. How good the air would feel, if one were in a motorcar rushing up the road somewhere along the river. She could imagine an inn—tiny white tables on an airy veranda, music, and as the night deepened, shaded candles and dancing. And it would be cool, cool!

Suddenly she turned and crossing the street in a halt of the traffic, went into a drug-store, into a telephone booth and called a number.

"Tell Mr. Burke that Miss Barrows is calling."

Her face was burning. She felt a deep scorn of herself. But her heart gave a leap when Mr. Burke's voice said:

"Fine! Good little girl for calling me. No, no, I'm not busy. Where are you now? Fine! Go into the Plaza, and I'll call for you. What? Well, just telephone your mother, can't you? Right! I'll be around there in half an hour or so. You are a nice little thing to call me."



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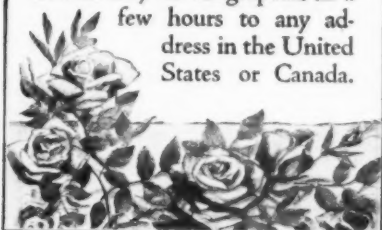
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Wedding and other anniversaries are so beautifully commemorated with a gift of flowers.

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Remember that with the Florists' Telegraph Delivery Service flowers may be telegraphed in a few hours to any address in the United States or Canada.



Coming home that evening after the delicious little dinner, served just as she would have had it on a breeze-swept veranda with shaded lights and flowers, Mr. Burke gave her a little lecture in his paternal tone.

"You work hard, and you owe it to yourself to have all the good times you can. Why, child, why should you have turned me down the way you did the other day? You see, I'm not such a bad old fellow, am I? Matter of fact, I'm lonely. Friends all in the country just now, you see. You must be good to me and let me get you out into the country air whenever I can. You and I can have no end of good times, if you'll only be sensible."

"You're awfully nice to me," she murmured, sincerely grateful.

She so wanted to have this sort of good times, so different from anything she had ever known. It seemed to her she liked Mr. Burke a little better. She had an impulse to frankness. "I don't think I—I look nice enough to go to places with you. My clothes aren't—you know, I can't dress the way your friends do, and—"

Mr. Burke's eyes sharpened as if they speculated whether this quiet little girl was as unsophisticated as he had thought.

"Oh, clothes! If that's what bothers you, buy yourself a pretty frock on—"

The next word would have been "me," but like the movement of his hand toward a breast pocket, it was never finished. After all, he was not quite sure of his ground yet. There was something about her he did not quite get, a quality in this adventure that restrained him oddly. He felt his way:

"Do you know, Lily, child, you have a very nice way of carrying yourself—rather uncommon. With the right sort of clothes, people would look at you twice anywhere. You've got a certain something—"

Her face glowed. "Oh, have I? I know how I would like to look—like Miss Alexa Sturtevant."

"Oh-ho! You have got good taste."

"Do you know her?"—eagerly.

AN unusual warmth came into Holbrook Burke's eyes. Yes, he knew and admired Miss Sturtevant, the finest type of fine lady, an aristocrat in the best sense of the term. And he went on to tell Lily about her, about her war-record and her charities and her beautiful country home.

Lily felt deeply pleased, as if some ideal she had secretly held close in her heart were being confirmed. And when, a few days later, Alexa Sturtevant came into the store, her eyes followed her with a new interest, absorbed every detail of dress and gesture of this woman whom even Mr. Burke profoundly admired. A real lady! Lily wondered about her, and her wonder was touched with wistfulness. It was a funny world, where one woman could have everything and another almost nothing.

It was beginning to seem to Lily as if she had very little, when you came to think about it. And she wanted so much! A whole new world of things she longed for had opened up for her

suddenly. Most of all, she wanted a chance to make the best of herself: she wanted beauty. She believed there were only two things she needed to be beautiful—happiness and the right kind of clothes. When she was happy, her eyes were stars and her lips vivid. Give her the right sort of clothes, and the something that was in her, which the girls called "class," would flower for any eye to see.

Her mouth set, and her eyes flamed. "I'm going to be happy! I'm going to get something out of life before it's too late. I don't mean any harm; I'm not going to do anything wrong; and I don't see whose business it is if I now and then have a few good times."

SO Rodney and her family were not told about Mr. Burke. Why should she tell them when there was nothing wrong about what she was doing? Rodney was working overtime in his new position; he was absorbed in making good with his new employers, with whom he was more or less on trial, and he could seldom call for her when work was over. She tried not to think about him, for when she did, an ache came into her heart.

But one Sunday afternoon he found her at home and asked her to go to one of the beaches for a swim.

"Oh, Rod, it's so hot, and the beach will be packed. We'll most likely have to stand up all the way out and back."

"I don't know what's the matter with you lately, Lil. You never want to go anywhere, and you always seem to be thinking about something else when I'm around. Is it anything I've done?"

She wished he wouldn't look at her so patiently and gently. "It's the hot weather," she sighed. "Oh, heavens, I wish I could have another vacation. I'm so sick of working and working."

He sat down in front of her and touched her hand awkwardly. She saw with wonder that he was struggling with a deep embarrassment.

"Listen here, Lil," he stammered. "I didn't mean to say anything yet, but I'm pretty sure now the Crescent people are going to advance me. You know I've only just been waiting for the right kind of prospects to—to— Look here, dear, let's you and me—let's us get married. It's safe enough now, seems to me. And I want to get you out of that store."

To his dismay she shrank back. There was none of the joy in her eyes he had expected.

"What is it?" he asked her. "Don't you—love me enough, dear?"

"Oh, I love you; I'm sure of that," she said in a low voice. "There's nobody so good as you are, Roddy. But to get married, to have to live on a small salary, the two of us—I don't know."

"Well, it isn't so darned small! And there's a big chance where I am now. I know we could swing it, Lil, if you—cared enough."

"I do care, Rodney, I do! But let's not be in a hurry. Let's wait until fall—until—"

She did not know what it was she wanted to wait for—some lingering hope of a more shining destiny, perhaps. She only knew that Mr. Burke's lavishness



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was the self that pretended to think that Holbrook Burke's suggestion was merely an unselfish benevolence, and there was the self that could not be fooled. And these two selves were like two persons in a boat engaged in a blind argument while a smooth, swift current carried them toward their unescapable fate. She dropped asleep exhausted from these contending voices; she awoke again and lay in the darkness weeping rebelliously. Would life always go on for her in the monotony of coming home at night to pork chops and her father washing his hands with yellow laundry soap? Would she never dine in brilliant restaurants and ride in luxurious cars, never wear the lovely clothes that would express herself—never once, just once in a long lifetime, have a little day of beauty?

She awakened in the morning benumbed. She dressed with hands that jerked and twitched; now and then she stopped and remained staring at nothing, with eyes that held both fascination and fear in them. Before she had finished dressing, she climbed on a chair and took from the farthest corner of her wardrobe shelf a candy-box, and from the box a tightly folded roll of bank-notes. For many months she had been saving up for a fur-trimmed coat for next winter. With a glance to make sure the door was closed, she folded these notes into her handkerchief and pinned it to her underbodice.

DURING her luncheon time she went up to the gown department, where she had a friend.

"Sally, you know that Lanvin copy in black Canton crêpe you had in the window last week? If it isn't sold, I want to try it on."

"Heavens, Lily, have you robbed a bank or anything? But say, it would be stunning on you! It's got wonderful lines. I saw Alexa Sturtevant in an original that was a good deal like that, and—wait, I'll show you the kind of hat she wore with it."

Half an hour later Lily came out of one of the fitting-rooms. The charming dress was hers, and hers the exactly right hat to go with it. They reposed in tissue-paper nests, and Sally was to keep them for her until tomorrow noon.

The next morning she rushed through her breakfast hurriedly. She did not want Aunt Emmie and her father to get away and leave her alone with her mother. She could scarcely eat because of a queer sickening choke in her throat. But she went through the motions of eating with one eye on the battered alarm-clock her father always brought out from his bedroom and placed on the sideboard. Then she set down her cup and sprang up.

"But dearie, you haven't eaten your egg! Don't you feel well?"

Her mother hovered between the table and the kitchen door, the coffee-pot in her hand. Lily turned away to straighten her hat before the sideboard mirror. She had not looked at her mother, but it seemed to her that she saw her more plainly than she ever had before. She saw the patient endurance of her face, the loving anxiety in her faded gray eyes that had once been like Lily's, lovely.

seemed to spoil her for what Rodney could offer.

ONE evening after a week of sweltering heat, when they were driving back to town after dinner at a roadhouse on Long Island, Burke remarked casually that she was looking tired, losing her color.

"What you need, my dear, is a couple of days at the seaside. I know a little hotel down the coast that is very cool and quiet. Suppose we motor down there Saturday? You can come back Sunday night or early Monday, and you'll feel as fit as a fiddle for the rest of the week. What do you say, little girl?"

His voice was carefully casual. But her eyes widened, the pupils growing tense. She listened to his description of the place, and her weary body ached for the wind and the surf. There was a thundering of blood in her head.

But scurrying about panic-stricken in the confusion of her mind was one small, cold thought: he was putting her to a test. Now at last the show-down! If she passed it up, she would see no more of Mr. Holbrook Burke. And her life would become once more a drab affair

of small cheap pleasures. It would become flavorless indeed, it seemed to her.

"Oh, I don't believe I could." She desperately sought a compromise. "My mother—"

"You needn't tell her," Mr. Burke said promptly. "Haven't you some girl friend you can be supposed to visit? Come, come, little girl, you're not so stupid that you can't think up an excuse. I thought you were a sensible child. I'm only suggesting something that will rest you and give you some fun. Why do you hesitate? Your life's your own, isn't it? What harm could there be? You owe it to yourself."

And so on, the fluent phrases that muffled his meaning.

WHEN she got out a few blocks from home, where he usually left her, she had promised nothing. But it was understood that he would be waiting with the car when the store closed at one on the following Saturday. This was Thursday. She scarcely said good night, for her thoughts were in a humming confusion, benumbing her.

From that moment it seemed as if she became divided into two selves. There

One cream to protect against wind and sun

A different cream to cleanse the skin thoroughly

WIND and dust whip the natural moisture out of the skin. Sun burns and tans it and coarsens its texture. To keep your skin from becoming permanently rough and coarse, you must protect it yourself before you go out.

The cream to use before going out

Pond's *Vanishing Cream* gives the skin just the protection it needs. It is a softening cream based on an ingredient famous for its soothing effect on the skin. This cream acts as an invisible shield against the drying effect of wind and sun. It keeps the natural moisture in the skin and prevents dust and dirt from clogging the pores.

The moment you smooth Pond's *Vanishing Cream* on the face it disappears, leaving the skin delightfully soft and velvety. Moreover it cannot reappear to make the face shiny for it is entirely free from oil.

The smooth surface which it gives the skin forms a perfect base for powder. In warm weather when the face has a greater tendency to shine, use Pond's *Vanishing Cream* to hold the powder and see how much longer you can go without powdering.

The cream to use for cleansing

AT night, just before retiring, or right after you have come in from an automobile trip or any unusual exposure to dust and dirt, cleanse your face



To protect your skin against wind and sunburn and to hold the powder, apply Pond's Vanishing Cream before going out

thoroughly with Pond's *Cold Cream*. This cream is entirely different from the protective daytime cream. It is made with just enough oil to penetrate the pores and rid them of dirt without overloading them with oil.

When you have smoothed Pond's *Cold Cream* well into the pores and allowed it to work its way out of the skin again, wipe it off with a soft cloth. This deep cleansing leaves the skin free from the grime that bores too deep for ordinary washing to remove.

Once or twice a week after this nightly cleansing, give the face a second application of Pond's *Cold Cream*. Work it in gently where lines are starting to form. The oil in this delicate cream lubricates the skin and keeps it elastic, so that little lines cannot fasten themselves on the face and form wrinkles.

Start today to use these two creams

Both these creams are too delicate in texture to clog the pores and neither cream will encourage the growth of hair. Get them in jars or tubes in convenient sizes. Drug and department stores can supply you. The Pond's Extract Co., New York.

POND'S
Cold Cream for cleansing
Vanishing Cream to hold the powder

GENEROUS TUBES—MAIL COUPON TODAY

THE POND'S EXTRACT CO.,
172 Hudson St., New York.

Ten cents (10c) is enclosed for your special introductory tubes of the two creams every normal skin needs—enough of each cream for two weeks' ordinary toilet uses.

Name.....

Street.....

City..... State.....

"She's never had *anything*," Lily thought passionately. "Well, life's not going to cheat *me* that way. I'm going to have one day—one day, anyway."

AT the door as she was leaving, she looked back. And a curious sensation came to her. She felt as if she were invisible to them all, as if she had become completely detached from them and were walking out the door a ghost. In the midst of her burning excitement a sense of dreary sadness chilled her. Life was terrible to her in that instant. Nothing, not even her mother's love, could solve her problems for her, or avert her destiny.

The instant she closed the kitchen door, she started sharply and clenched her hands. She had not told them that she would not be home when the store closed that afternoon. Well, perhaps that was better. She could send word—if she didn't come home.

"Nothing is settled yet," she thought. "I can back out at any minute, and nobody will know. That is best—because I'm not going, I'm not! I was crazy even to think of it. Sally will take back that dress—"

Her heart ached at thought of the dress. It was too good for anything but the occasion she had bought it for. It would not keep her warm next winter, no, indeed! And her heart hardened with self-pity.

It was just before noon that one of the telephone-girls sent the word along that Lily's Rodney wanted her to call him up as soon as the store closed. It was important, he said. A strained and harassed expression came into Lily's face.

But when the gong had sounded and the girls began streaming toward the dressing-rooms, Lily hurried with them. In front of the telephone booths she

wavered. Just for an instant she hesitated. Then she clenched her hands and went on. And some voice deep in her heart cried poignantly: "Oh, Rodney, my dear!"

But her eyes were very bright, and there was a nervous gayety in her voice as she greeted Sally, who had promised to help her into the new dress in one of the fitting-rooms.

Into the little white-paneled cubicle the two girls shut themselves. A rustling of tissue-paper, a tender lifting out, and over Lily's head went the new frock. Sally's practiced fingers were at the hooks and eyes; they patted and pulled deftly. More rustling, and out came the hat. Lily lifted it reverently, carefully pulled it down to the correct angle.

And her eyes met the brilliant, strained eyes in the mirror. "I'm going to be happy," she thought passionately. "I've got to be."

She stood pulling on the long white gloves. Sally got up from her knees, where she had been doing something to the hem. She stood off, her head critically on one side. Then she too looked into the mirror: Lily stood there framed, straight and slender, her head held a little high.

Sally stared, as if all at once she saw something more than a new frock and a new hat.

"Well!" she exclaimed. "I've always wondered who it is you make me think of, and now I know. It's the queerest—wait a minute."

She darted out and came back with the torn sheet of an illustrated supplement. "Look at that!" she laughed.

Lily held in her hand the reproduction of a full-length photograph, underneath which was written: "*Miss Alexa Sturtevant at the dedication of—*" and so on. She did not read the rest.

"Oh, Sally!" she protested.

"But, honest, Lily, look! I don't mean you look like her—you're prettier than she is; but now that I see you in that dress, there's a something about you that reminds me of her. It isn't just the dress, it's—maybe the way you hold your head—no, not just that either; maybe it's the same kind of style."

She stopped, regarding Lily with a puzzled interest. "Well," she sighed, "I don't know. Maybe it's—I guess *maybe* it's class. For that's what you've got, Lily—dress you up right—class."

Lily's eyes stared at her own reflection in the mirror. Class—the something that Alexa Sturtevant had, that something you couldn't buy in any shop! Could it be true that she had it? Was there something you had regardless of where or how you were born, that had nothing to do with the outside shell of your life? Was there something that with the right chance shone through the surface until people said about you that you were a lady, a real lady—something that kept you *right*, made you do things right, think right?

She stood there, looking at herself, a tall and slender girl with eyes that were shadowed with wonder. Something subtle and powerful was taking place in the depths of her. Perhaps there stirred in her for the first time the blood of all

those Barrows who were in Aunt Emmie's book, pioneers, preachers, soldiers, judges—the birth of pride, true pride in a clean body and soul.

She stood very still, as one might who watched a miracle. For she had remembered Holbrook Burke. And she saw him, almost as if he stood at the elbow of that other girl in the mirror—gross, without delicacy or sense of responsibility, without chivalry, wanting what his senses prompted him to want, and going after it, ruthless as only the unimaginative can be, coarse underneath his polished veneer, incapable and undesirable of love.

The new pride in her spoke—and it was the end of Holbrook Burke: "You're too good for him, Lily Barrows."

With a catch of her breath she turned about, took the box into which Sally had folded her working-dress, carried it down to her locker and walked swiftly out into the street.

MR. BURKE had been waiting some time, and his watch was in his hand. But the impatience in his eyes gave way to an admiring smile as he watched her coming toward him. He himself opened the door of the car for her. But she stopped before she had reached him, and although she looked at him, she did not seem to see him. There was complete serenity in her eyes.

"I'm sorry you had to wait," she said. "But you needn't wait any longer—now or ever."

"Now or ever? What do you mean?"

But she had turned her back upon him and was walking toward the corner. She had not said good-by, but that was not necessary for Holbrook Burke. He knew finality when he saw it in a back. He climbed heavily into his car.

"Oh, well—to the club, Oscar. I'll take a nap."

As his car swung around the corner into Fifth Avenue, a young man charged around the corner of Sixth. Thus he ran full tilt into Lily Barrows, walking toward the subway.

"Oh, Rodney!"

"Lily! What luck! Been trying to get you on the phone. So afraid I'd missed you. Listen, old dear—I've got it, that advance with the Crescent people. It's a great chance for me; I'm going to eat it up. It's a mighty good salary, of course, but it's more than that: it's my future—and yours, dear."

The eyes she raised to his were completely happy ones, but they were deeper than he had ever seen them.

"Rodney, I'm so glad, so glad!"

"Well, I tell you I feel pretty nifty myself. Look here, can't we go somewhere for the afternoon? You hadn't anything planned, had you? You look sort of dressed up."

She stood away from him a little. "Do you like this dress and hat, Roddy?"

His eyes took her in then. They became touched with wistfulness.

"You're lovely, Lily. Somehow you look too good for me."

She took his arm with a quick gesture. "No, no, Roddy. But come home with me so I can take it off. It's going to be saved for our wedding-trip, you see."

"PLAY BALL"

They could hear Bull Feeney's bellow to the last row in the bleachers. And how he *did* ride the players! Small wonder that they framed him! How they did it Gerald Beaumont will tell you in our next issue.



Mae Murray



Anita Stewart



Priscilla Dean



Betty Compson

How Famous Movie Stars Keep Their Hair Beautiful

The Secret of Having Soft, Silky, Bright, Fresh-Looking Hair

STUDY the pictures of these beautiful women and you will see just how much their hair has to do with their appearance.

Beautiful hair is not a matter of luck, it is simply a matter of care.

You, too, can have beautiful hair, if you care for it properly. Beautiful hair depends almost entirely upon the care you give it.

Shampooing is always the most important thing.

It is the shampooing which brings out the real life and luster, natural wave and color, and makes your hair soft, fresh and luxuriant.

When your hair is dry, dull and heavy, lifeless, stiff and gummy, and the strands cling together, and it feels harsh and disagreeable to the touch, it is because your hair has not been shampooed properly.

When your hair has been shampooed properly, and is thoroughly clean, it will be glossy, smooth and bright, delightfully fresh-looking, soft and silky.

While your hair must have frequent and regular washing to keep it beautiful, it cannot stand the harsh effect of ordinary soaps. The free alkali in ordinary soaps soon dries the scalp, makes the hair brittle and ruins it.

That is why leading motion picture stars and discriminating women, everywhere, now use Mulsified coconut oil shampoo. This clear, pure and entirely greaseless product cannot possibly injure, and it does not dry the scalp or make the hair brittle, no matter how often you use it.

If you want to see how really beautiful you can make your hair look, just follow this simple method:

A Simple, Easy Method

FIRST, put two or three teaspoonfuls of Mulsified in a cup or glass with a little warm water. Then wet the hair

and scalp with clear warm water. Pour the Mulsified evenly over the hair and rub it thoroughly all over the scalp and throughout the entire length, down to the ends of the hair.

Two or three teaspoonfuls will make an abundance of rich, creamy lather. This should be rubbed in thoroughly and briskly with the finger tips, so as to loosen the dandruff and small particles of dust and dirt that stick to the scalp.

After rubbing in the rich, creamy Mulsified lather, rinse the hair and scalp thoroughly—always using clear, fresh, warm water. Then use another application of Mulsified, again working up a lather and rubbing it in briskly as before.

Two waters are usually sufficient for washing the hair, but sometimes the third is necessary.

You can easily tell, for when the hair is perfectly clean, it will be soft and silky in the water, the strands will fall apart easily, each separate hair floating alone in the water, and the entire mass, even while wet, will feel loose, fluffy and light to the touch and be so clean it will fairly squeak when you pull it through your fingers.

Rinse the Hair Thoroughly

THIS is very important. After the final washing, the hair and scalp should be rinsed in at least two changes of good warm water and followed with a rinsing in cold water.

When you have rinsed the hair thoroughly, wring it as dry as you can; finish by rubbing it with a towel, shaking it and fluffing it until it is dry. Then give it a good brushing.

After a Mulsified shampoo you will find the hair will dry quickly and evenly and have the appearance of being much thicker and heavier than it is.

If you want to always be remembered for your beautiful, well-kept hair, make it a rule to set a certain day each week



Mildred Harris

for a Mulsified coconut oil shampoo. This regular weekly shampooing will keep the scalp soft and the hair fine and silky, bright, fresh-looking and fluffy, wavy and easy to manage—and it will be noticed and admired by everyone.

You can get Mulsified at any drug store or toilet goods counter, anywhere in the world. A 4-ounce bottle should last for months.



Why do women like pipe-smokers?

We asked many women. One said: "Because a man who thinks things out, does them and goes all the way through with anything he starts generally smokes a pipe if he smokes at all—and nearly always he does smoke."

Another replied: "A pipe smoker is more of a home man, it seems to me. There is no better picture of contentment than a man smoking a pipe in his home after the day's work is done."

"He is more honest, more reliable, more manly," said another—but she was rather young.

There were many reasons given by the fair ladies; some of them not very powerful from a logical viewpoint.

And just to show that woman is not the only illogical of the two sexes, we asked a number of men why they liked the tobacco they smoked. One said it was strong enough for him. Another said it was mild enough for him—and they were smoking the same brand. All of them had some more-or-less indefinite reason for liking a certain tobacco, but putting that feeling into words was difficult.

Even our old Edgeworth smokers — our best friends — have difficulty in telling why they like Edgeworth. "It is a friendly, friend-making tobacco that just suits me," was the best answer we could get. *Just suits me!* There's the whole thing.

But Edgeworth doesn't suit

everybody. Out of every hundred pipe-smokers there may be one or two who couldn't get supreme satisfaction out of Edgeworth.

Nevertheless, we would like to send any pipe-smoker free samples of Edgeworth.

If you will send us your name and address on a postcard, we will forward samples of Edgeworth, Ready-Rubbed and Plug Slice, and there is no tag attached, "Send money if you like it." The samples are free and postpaid. Address your card to Larus & Brother Company, 42 South 21st St., Richmond, Va.

To Retail Tobacco Merchants: If your jobber cannot supply you with Edgeworth, Larus & Brother Company will gladly send you prepaid by parcel post a one- or two-dozen carton of any size of Plug Slice or Ready-Rubbed for the same price you would pay the jobber.



INHIBITING WATTLES

(Continued from page 62)

cerned, delivered his cherished "man-to-man stuff" upon taking a drink, but in reason or season; while Mr. Valentine's somewhat vague duty—undertaken gladly—seemed to be the task of furnishing a running comment, rhetorical and profane. Breakfast, there was cause to believe, became a meal hideous for Wattles. In short, for two or three weeks the family hummed with moral effort and was greatly uplifted. All but Vera!

"It's perfectly absurd," she told me. "It's like trying to stop Vesuvius with words. Do you think that conversation will discover what is wrong with a man who after fifty-eight completely nonalcoholic years suddenly takes to drink? I know what's wrong with him."

"What?"

"I'll not tell you," said Vera. "Wait, and find out."

She left me, to give tea to a group of suitors, equally sleek-haired but less clearly defined than young Mr. Stevens. "I'm weary of men!" she announced in the doorway.

Apparently, however, her family, obscurely and reluctantly but none the less earnestly, were all the while groping toward her point of view. At the end of three weeks they called in the family physician, old Dr. Flint—or rather, the head family physician, for people of the Valentines' position keep a hutch of doctors as one would keep rabbits. Wattles, curiously enough, once his secret vice was known and brought out into the open, seemed to have lost all shame and all self-control. There was about him now a gay abandonment, as if ethical burdens had been cast completely upon the shoulders of others.

The thing that seemed to worry Mr. Valentine most of all was where Wattles kept his cache of Amontillado.

"Wants to get into it himself," suggested Griswold in an impertinent moment.

"Don't be insolent!" said his father. "It's very queer," he continued. "Tells me he gets it from his brother-in-law, who's just gone into the liquor business."

"Just gone in!"

"Yes. Wattles says all the young men are doing so now. It's so much more profitable than keeping a garage—and safer. But I don't believe him—that is, about his brother-in-law. You couldn't get sherry like that nowadays even from a revenue agent. He has it somewhere in the house."

DR. FLINT examined Wattles from head to foot. Mrs. Valentine had had a second cousin once who after a fall from a horse and the insertion of a silver plate above the brain, had taken to forging checks. Wattles, however, was found right as a trivet—an exceptional specimen of manhood. He must have led a very careful life. Not a thing wrong with him except, perhaps, a touch of rheumatism. Of course,—old Dr. Flint looked slightly bemused,—"a chronic disease like that, they all affect, naturally, as it were—the character. Yes, yes, one

does find it. You couldn't—er—send him away to Virginia Hot Springs, or anything like that, could you?" This last with sudden hopefulness, as if a cheering prospect of a shifting of responsibility was opened up.

"Certainly not!" said Mr. Valentine.

Dr. Flint looked disappointed. "Well,"—rather desperately,—"then—er—try *sal hepatica*."

For a while the results were encouraging. Three days, to be exact. There was no explanation, save a possible temporary interest on the part of Wattles for a new drink. Mrs. Valentine was delighted. "I have always said," she observed, "that there are no remedies like the old ones. Psycho-analysis—huh! The best cure in the world for a disordered soul is a liver-pill. You remember your poor Uncle Strickland in Rome in nineteen-nine, when he tried to run off with that Italian dancer?"

At the end of the fourth day disaster, more dire and swift than any preceding, arrived.

The Valentines were giving a dinner to a visiting English bishop; it was a large dinner, I gathered,—I wasn't there,—and formal. The Valentines were rather flushed with the success of the *sal hepatica* and looked forward to having a pleasant time. Wattles took a curious method of circumventing this anticipation—a Barmecidan method, one might call it.

Very rapidly and very precisely, during the first two courses, he entered from the serving-room, passed around the table, and passed out again. There was a magnificent gesture of attention, but no food. What little there was was obtained falteringly from the panic-stricken John. At the end of the second course Wattles, his trance broken in upon, was completely removed, protesting hoarsely, *sotto voce*, from the scene.

The bishop subsequently tore up a letter he was writing home about the benefits of Prohibition.

It was, as Mrs. Valentine aptly expressed it, too much!

The following Tuesday, Mr. Beers came to stay for an indefinite period.

MR. BEERS, during the brief weeks I saw him, remained a puzzle to me. He belonged to what might be classified as the scientific side of modern youth. As I understood it, he cared much more for germs than he did for petting. He was as much of a specialist in his way as Vera was in hers, or Griswold in his. His "line" was desperately psycho-neurotic. There was no time for idle dreaming about extraneous matters. Beers studied you with his cold green eyes, set in a curiously chubby and boyish face, and immediately, you felt, pinned you to your place in his collection of morons. Under his steady gaze you became a trifle warm at the back of your neck at the memory of certain secret and treasured vices, such as three cups of coffee at breakfast, and things like that; and you were careful never, never to tell him your dreams. Only when he looked

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at Vera did any expression approaching humanity swim into his remarkable retinas, and then it was an expression more like the sly shadow of a goldfish coming from behind aqueous ferns into watery sunlight. With his arrival the conversation of the Valentine family suddenly blossomed with exotic terms.

The amorphous "complex," the sullen "inhibition," the gay "release," the misunderstood "libido," were as common as the sounds of horns in an orchestra—were as common, that is, with all save Mr. Valentine. His attitude was one of silent but dogged obstruction. When he spoke at all, during these discussions, it was only to ask in the most irritating manner possible for the definition of words whose meanings had already been explained to him a score of times. That he meant to be irritating there was not the slightest doubt.

Mr. Beers took entire charge of the household. He was given a magnificent bedroom and study on the third floor, the latter of which he decorated sparsely but appropriately with photographs of Johns Hopkins professors and quaint little monographs with titles such as, "The Dream-life of George Washington," or "William Shakespeare as a Great-aunt Complex." These were written mostly by young women in Western universities. Along one bookshelf ran a sinister series of volumes in black and gold by Freud and Jung. They looked like Vienna at night. Into this eyrie Wattles disappeared with an alarming frequency—enough, at least, to interfere seriously with his other duties. He was swallowed up. From behind closed doors came muffled and prolonged conversation. Wattles emerged much shaken. But that it was not altogether an easy task for Mr. Beers, I gathered from a remark he let fall to me in one of his rare moments of confidence.

"Butlers," he said, waving a disconnected hand, "are among the most difficult of cases—butlers and grandmothers. They are trained to suppression. Very shy! They remind me—er—of white-tailed deer."

YOU must not imagine, however, that our life—I say our life, because at the time I was so frequently at the Valentines—was sacrificed solely to grim moral utilitarianism. Not in the least! In the evenings we sometimes played games. There was one game of which Mrs. Valentine was especially fond. I think in it she found some "release" for a thoroughly upright life. I don't know exactly how to describe this *jeu d'esprit* except to say it was rather like "Button! Button! Who has the button?" although in this instance it should have been called, "Thought! Thought! Who has the evil one?" or, "Crime! Crime! Who's the criminal?"

My own ideas are still a trifle vague, although I played at least thirteen times. But then, I never was a bit good at games. What you did was this: Mr. Beers sat in a large chair in the library, and everyone else left the room—everyone, that is, except Mr. Valentine; he never left any room under any circumstances while Mr. Beers was in it. He merely sat and smoked heavily, with an

emphasis upon the immovability of a fleshy man when he is depressed.

In the hall outside, or wherever it was, the conspirators, if I may call them that, gathered together and elected a certain one of their number "It." "It's" duty was to think as rapidly as possible of the very worst thing "It" could, provided of course it was always something that could be mentioned between ladies and gentlemen. The nominee, "It," was then to imagine himself, or herself, in detail and with fervor in the position of the perpetrator of an outrage. The rest were to retain utterly guileless minds. When "It" was thoroughly steeped in evil, a return to the presence of Mr. Beers was made, and there, by means of questions and the reactions to them, he was to discover what is so pleasantly called in newspaper language "the guilty party."

SUPPOSE, for instance, Mrs. Valentine had chosen a delicious murder—an elderly uncle, who had never existed, for his money. Mr. Beers, hastily running through the keywords of other crimes, would finally come to this one, and turning to Mrs. Valentine, would say:

"Knife!"

Mrs. Valentine, being a good housewife, and having in the long interval of questioning become somewhat absent-minded, would promptly answer:

"Fork!"

Sometimes she said: "Napkin!"

Obviously she was innocent. Mr. Beers would then turn to Vera and repeat the question, and she, blessed with the unwritten-upon mind of youth, would retort: "Red!"

Then Mrs. Valentine would say: "Let's try it again!"

That Mr. Beers was invariably wrong did not seem in the least to deter him or abate the keen interest of the others. "Of course," he explained, "it is very, very difficult under the circumstances. Now, if you were only real criminals!"

Occasionally Mr. Stevens was made part of our little circle. He didn't seem to like it. I think he thought it was silly. He thought almost everything silly except carburetors. He seemed particularly to resent Vera's absorption in Aurelius Beers. Once I came upon him and Vera in the recesses of the front hall where he was bidding Vera good-by.

"I'm through!" he was saying; and, evidence of unwonted passion on his part, he was putting on his extremely becoming light felt hat backward. "I'm through!" he continued, totally unaware of his serious sartorial predicament. "Damned good and through!"

"Well, don't swear so damned much!" retorted Vera angrily.

"I'm through!"

Vera put more femininity into her voice than usually was the case. "Please don't be so foolish!" she pleaded.

"Yes, I will! No—that isn't what I meant! I meant, I will—no, I meant, I won't!"

"Your hat is on backward," said Vera. "I don't care." And he strode down the hall.

But that isn't important; what is important is that at this moment somewhere out of the shadows stepped Wattles, a look of the most utter despair

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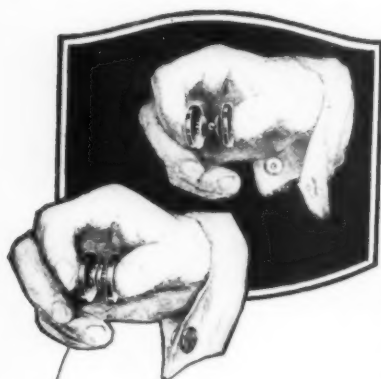
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on his lined, kindly face. To say that I, halfway down the stairs, was astonished would be an understatement. But I doubt, even at that, if I was as astonished as Vera. She had lived in the same house with Wattles and was more used to the perfect equivalence which—save for the moments of Amontillado—distinguished him. She continued to stare at him, therefore, with her mouth a little open. Wattles came up very close to her, his figure deprecatory.

"You aren't—I beg your pardon, Miss Vera! I mean to say, you're not sending Mr. Stevens away for good, are you?"

"Wha-a—" stammered Vera in a stricken voice.

"I—I know, miss. It seems queer. But then, you see, I've brought you up since you was a little girl."

"Wattles," said Vera, collecting her dignity, "you've been drinking again."

"No, miss, on my honor. Not a drop since Thursday!" Wattles' figure seemed to shrink into itself. "Well, then," he said drearily, and like a man who has lost a battle, "I'll be going."

"I think you'd better," said Vera.

It seemed to me that here was something not to be brushed aside by any ordinary explanation. I waited until the two of them had left the hall before I crept bewildered into the street.

AT the end of fourteen days Mr. Beers reported progress. "It is not," he explained, "the ordinary case. It is much subtler and more difficult. As far as I can discover, there is no early mental lesion, as it were. Wattles' childhood seems to have been singularly free from the disturbing complexes that so darken the lives of our little ones. Fortunately—er—he was left an orphan at an early age, so he has no recollection of his parents whatsoever, you understand. Nothing but bird-nesting! It seems to have been entirely bird-nesting on a large English estate, where he was being trained to be a—er—'tweenie,' I think they call it. Up to the present, bird-nesting has not been discovered to have any very serious after-effects. No, I should say this thing is of recent date, some grave disturbance that has altered the normal current of his life."

On the sixteenth day Mr. Beers announced that he had been able to isolate Wattles' dreams. "It is very curious," he said. "At first—as is so often the case—he claimed he did not dream at all, but when I told him that everybody dreamed, he was very much interested, and recently he has been able to wake himself up and write them down as they occur."

"What does he dream about?" asked Mrs. Valentine breathlessly.

"Nero," said Mr. Beers dispassionately. "Nero?"

"Yes—I think it's Nero. It's a large man with classic features, but—er—he has side-whiskers. Nero didn't have side-whiskers, did he?"

"No," said Vera.

"Well, it's very odd. I should say it was a combination of Nero and—er—Mr. Valentine."

"Ah!" breathed Vera in a sibilant whisper.

Mr. Beers looked at her with a raised eyebrow and proceeded calmly. "At all

events," he said, "it has to do with feasting and wassail—a large dinner-party with wine being passed about by slaves." He paused and regarded Vera dreamily for a moment. "There is another dream," he continued, "which seems to be equally frequent—almost coexistent, as it were. It has to do with 'Romeo and Juliet.'"

"'Romeo and Juliet?'"

At this point Mr. Valentine arose suddenly, turned around once like a disturbed dog, threw his evening paper noisily onto the table, and sat down again.

"Yes, 'Romeo and Juliet.' He doesn't call it that; he calls it the play where the young Italian gentleman and the young Italian lady poison each other. He saw Sothorn in it many years ago, and it seems to have made a deep impression on his mind. Of course,"—Mr. Beers hesitated and cleared his throat,—"this would be the natural—er—erotic complex we're so constantly searching for."

Mr. Valentine rumbled like a motor-car the starter of which has just been stepped on. "I wish," he said, "that—erum—laying aside all this nonsense,—I beg your pardon!—we'd get down to something practical. I would like to find out where Wattles keeps his liquor so that I could confiscate it."

"Is that all?" said Mr. Beers mildly. "Why, I could have told you that long ago. I discovered it the second day I was here. Would you like to see for yourself? But of course you mustn't disturb it just now; that would be very serious. Possibly Wattles is there at this moment."

IT was an exciting little expedition we made in comparative darkness. Mr. Beers, armed with an electric torch, led the way. He took us up to the third story and then along a dimly lighted passageway to what must have been the servants' quarters. Beyond this was a twisting stair that led to a closed door that opened into an attic, or trunk-room.

"Tiptoes!" whispered Mr. Beers.

He paused with his hand on the latch of the door. "Not a sound, please!" he begged, and switched off his torch.

The door opened noiselessly to his touch. Beyond was a limbo of boxes and trunks and suitcases. At the far end a faint light, coming apparently from behind a barricade of opaque material, cast a faint glow on mysterious rafters and brick-work. With his finger to his lips Mr. Beers drew us across the intervening space. The barricade proved to be a number of boxes piled with the most exact care so as to make a small and private inclosure. They reached to about a man's shoulder, and it was entirely easy to look over them and into the space beyond without being seen. An odd sight met our eyes.

Wattles, totally oblivious, was sitting cross-legged before a narrow board raised from the floor by a couple of bricks. This, by means of a torn cloth, two guttering candles, and odds and ends of silver and glassware, had been decked to resemble approximately a table set for a dinner. A quart of sherry at each end of the board furnished the only reality in what was otherwise quite

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clearly a feast of the imagination. At the moment, Wattles was raising a glass of wine to his lips. His gestures were ceremonious and courtly beyond words.

"I have the honor, my lord," he said, bowing to a fictitious guest at the head of the table, "of taking wine with you."

In an entirely altered voice, and as if replying to this toast, he said: "Ah—er—thank you, Mr. Wattles!" He passed the glass under his nose. "The aroma—delicious! I congratulate you. It is—er—"

"A special vintage, my lord—'08, I think. A present from my friend Mr. Valentine. I managed to secrete five cases."

In the silence an audible sigh escaped Mr. Valentine's lips. I was afraid Wattles would hear, but he didn't. "I trust, my lord," he continued, "we will speedily have the pleasure of drinking a bottle together at the approaching nuptials of my young friend Miss Valentine—old wine. . . . Ah, old wine and young love! Young love!" His head sank forward on his chest, as if somber reality had for an instant pierced the glamour of his elaborate make-believe.

Mr. Beers led us away. Outside the closed door he paused. "You see?" he said.

None of us did.

Once more safe in the library, Mr. Valentine delivered an opinion. "It is—erum—" he announced, "nothing but drunkenness and madness combined—drunkenness and madness of the most sordid kind. Erum!"

Mr. Beers looked pained.

"I am sorry," he said, "that the delicate and mysterious workings of the human mind should appeal to you in this manner."

DURING the next few days the situation grew more tense. One felt that one was on the verge of ultimate discovery. Wattles and Mr. Beers disappeared almost entirely from sight. That this atmosphere of expectation was justified was proven by a note I received from Vera the following Thursday. Ferment was in the hastily scribbled lines.

"Come at five o'clock this afternoon," it read. "We will all be there. I think success is ours."

I had considerable debate with myself as to whether to wear a gay gray suit—as a matter of dramatic contrast—or a black suit, with a winged collar and a black tie. I finally decided upon the latter as being more appropriate. And this brings me to the climax.

At five o'clock I found the entire Valentine family, including Mr. Beers, gathered in the drawing-room. That it was the drawing-room and not the library was a concession to the seriousness of the occasion. Vera was sitting before an empty tea-table, ready to pour tea. A log-fire crackled; the silver shone; and the curtains had been drawn to shut out the dusk of the February night. Mr. Beers had the chair of honor—a large chair in which his prematurely portly figure reclined easily. His eyes were half closed as if he were about to go into a trance. Opposite him sat Mr. Valentine, voluminously uninterested, while before the fireplace Griswold, in a straight-

backed chair, fidgeted in a manner foreign to his usual skeptical calm. Vera was alert and pink-checked; a charming evil flamed in her eyes.

"And now," said Mr. Beers suddenly out of portentous silence, "as we're all here, shall we begin?"

"Oh, do!" begged Vera.

Mr. Beers turned to Mr. Valentine. "I am afraid," he said deprecatingly, "it will be a revelation not altogether to your liking."

A curious look crossed Mr. Valentine's eyes as if this was something to which he was not unaccustomed.

"You see," said Mr. Beers, "it may fundamentally alter your habits of life."

"My habits of life?" Mr. Valentine opened his eyes wide.

"Exactly!" replied Mr. Beers. "Wattles," he went on, with a sudden hissing emphasis, "is a victim of a suppression unexpectedly planted in his life at the age of fifty-nine by an ill-thought-out decision on your part."

"I? What—what decision?" demanded Mr. Valentine. He showed signs of becoming angry.

"You will hear me in patience," admonished Mr. Beers calmly. "By your decision to abolish wine from your table. Wattles has been used, particularly in England, to a hospitality that expressed itself in a moderate use of wine. *Mens sana in*—well, never mind. At all events, it was a symbol. Now do you see what you have done?"

"No," said Mr. Valentine with unnecessary harshness. "I do not."

"You have hurt," continued Mr. Beers solemnly, "his sense of gayety. You have done a very serious thing in perverting the symbol. You must remember that his personality is entirely concentrated upon hospitality and—er—"

Mr. Valentine waved a hand in a gesture of complete contempt, but his voice was hoarsely uncertain. "Absurd!" he said. "Perfectly absurd! And if not, what is to be done, anyway?"

Mr. Beers was uninterested. "That," he said, "my dear sir, is entirely for you to decide. You can—er—replace wine upon your table, or dismiss Wattles. The latter course will, I dare say, mean his complete ruin, although I should do my best to sublimate his character into worthy channels."

The look of a man who sees water in a desert was beginning to creep across Griswold's charming young face.

Vera had risen to her feet, her hands clasped to her breast. Her eyes shone.

"I knew it!" she cried. "I knew it all along! I could have told you!"

"Sit down," said Mr. Beers. "You are as much to blame as he."

Vera, her enthusiasm cruelly arrested, sat down.

"Wattles," continued Mr. Beers, "is a romantic. In his simple but baffling character, romance and hospitality go hand in hand."

Vera stammered angrily. "What has that to do with me?" she demanded.

MR. BEERS partially closed his eyes again. "A great deal," he began in a rapid monotone, whose acceleration increased. "A great deal. I am not"—he waved a hand, like a man groping in

the dark—"intimately acquainted with the love-making habits of the average young man and woman of today. Perhaps they are those of this house; perhaps they are not. I have not had time to make a careful analysis, and will not have until I have completed other branches of research. However that may be, it is evident that your—I beg your pardon, Miss Valentine—that his—I mean, the courtship between you and Mr. Stevens does not appeal to Wattles."

Vera was staring at this remarkable young man with the eyes of a bird that has come upon a snake.

Mr. Beers did not seem in the least disturbed by this obvious dislike. "He is used," he continued, "to what, I dare say, is a more old-fashioned form of love-making—sunsets, picked flowers, hasty notes, and—er—an occasional embrace. Not the kind you mean, but the kind I mean. I am afraid that unless you can see your way to inject some of this—er—sentiment—into his life, even your father's efforts will be only partially successful."

VERA exhibited remarkable self-control.

"You mean, Mr. Beers," she asked, "that it is necessary that Wattles should see me actually kissing Billy Stevens?"

Beers colored slightly. "Well—er—" he said, "if you choose to put it that way, yes."

"Then," said Vera with the same death-like calm, "I will kiss him when I want to, or I'll not kiss him at all."

She stood up and elaborately brushed an imaginary speck from her slim skirt.

"I will not be rushed into marriage," she said, "and I will not be romantic. I like Billy Stevens—I like him awfully; but—but, I'm not going to be mushy until I'm at least thirty years old."

Mr. Beers sighed in the manner of a man who is weary of argument with people who will not be convinced. "Very well," he said. "It is not my affair. I can do some adjusting to environment, but not everything."

Vera collapsed into her chair, her brows knit in thought.

A sudden idea seemed to strike Mr. Beers. "Of course," he said, "if Stevens is entirely out of the question, and there is nobody else, I should be very glad—"

It was a delicate moment. Anger or laughter might have been its conclusion. I hung upon Vera's answer. Fortunately she remained calm. "Oh, thank you!" she said, her handkerchief up to her mouth. "Thank you so much! But I really couldn't."

"No," said Mr. Beers, unperturbed, "I didn't think you could."

A softer look crept into Vera's eyes, and a very entrancing dimple showed itself in a corner of one cheek. "Oh, well," she added, "I suppose—Billy's a lamb. I'll see what I can do, Mr. Beers."

From his chair, where one had entirely forgotten him, Mr. Valentine suddenly aroused himself.

"Griswold," he said earnestly, turning to his son, "what is the address of that—erum—fellow, where they said one could get gin?"

At this moment Wattles entered with the tea.

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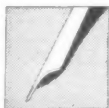
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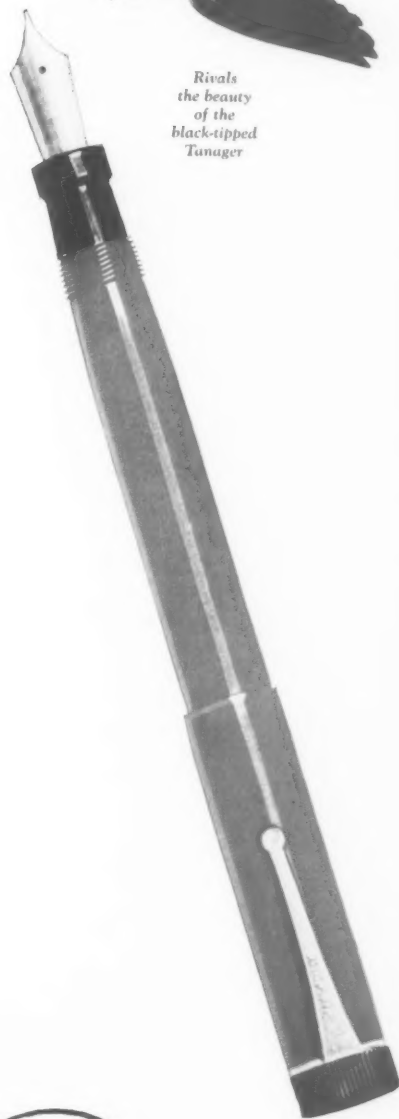
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DRIFTERS

(Continued from
page 67)

Least. And day after day a little man turned anxious eyes toward the vacant seats and in almost panicky anxiety worked with his lion in the arena in a vain attempt at something spectacular, something that would "send 'em away talking"—all to the one end that a man who had shown faith in him might be given faith in return by those whose efforts meant his livelihood.

IT was in the dusk of an afternoon that I had brought nothing but gloominess, a drizzly, glowering afternoon, the fourth rainy day in a week; and now, as Meg Patterson sat in the cage with his old lion, he heard an announcement that had been feared for days—the grumbling voice of the boss canvasman as he halted the general manager, making his afternoon rounds of the animal tent:

"That dope I heard today true, boss?"

"What dope?"

"Nothin' doin' in salaries tomorrow?"

"So?" There was a reluctant admission in the monosyllable. "What of it?"

"Nothin'—only I'd like to know. I got a bunch of men to handle, an' if there's anything of the kind comin' off, I ought to know about it beforehand. I can't have 'em all quittin' on me at once, you know—I got to pick out the loyal ones an' get 'em to handle the rest when they get the bad news."

"Then you'd better get 'em lined up."

There was a moment's silence, in which Meg Patterson crept closer to the bars of the lion's den, the while the boss canvasman stood rubbing his chin in doleful thought.

"Sure hate to see the old opery go on the rocks," he said at last. "It'll be awful tough on Blain."

"Yeh," was the reply; "maybe it'll teach him a lesson. Next time he starts in the show-business, he'll know better than to give his life away. If Blain'd looked after himself more and other people less, he'd have had more money in his till when the pinch came. You can't carry deadwood all your life and give work to every old broken-down bum in the business, and expect to get by with it!"

"No, that's right."

"You bet your neck it's right!" The manager moved closer. "You an' I've been with this trick a long time, Tim. What've we seen? Every old busted-up, frazzled-out bum in the world that couldn't get work anywhere else—they could get it here, just because Blain couldn't turn 'em down."

"Oh, it was fine when there was a big show to hide 'em in. But what about it now, when he aint got the money to hire the big acts, and has to get along with just his deadwood? You know what—the crowds are all looking the other way. Say, listen, it gives me the willies, just to look at it—contortionists so stiff they couldn't make their cakes on the ten-twenty-thirt', acrobats that are too old to even skin the cat, aerialists that get dizzy ten feet off the ground,

Patterson with that worn-out cat—there aint a real number in the whole lot, and Blain knows it. But he's trying to carry 'em on, and make a show out of 'em, when he's signing his own death-warrant doing it! Search me, what he's got me here as manager for."

They started to move out of the tent as the manager went on: "It's a cinch there aint much left to manage. This aint a circus any more—it's a charity bazaar! And not one of those birds that he's giving his life to would turn a finger to help him! Just wait till tomorrow when they get the news that the ghost wont walk—and watch 'em blow—"

"You're lying! You're lying! You're lying!" Meg Patterson, his white face pressed tight against the bars of the lion's cage, whispered it as he watched the two men walk away. "You're—"

THAT night Patterson sought his berth in the circus sleeper, only to stare through the long hours into the black above him and to emerge next morning a haggard, drawn-featured old man.

That afternoon, following the matinée, Blain interrupted the lion-trainer just as he was finishing the erection of a small boxlike structure in one corner of the practice arena.

"Patterson!" he called in his usual growling tones, and the little man hurried toward him. Blain pointed his cigar in the direction of the box. "What's that?"

"I'm making a house, sir—it'll look better after it's painted."

"The old fire-act, huh? What're you going to use in it?"

"Oh, just a dummy, sir—I heard the manager saying that he needed spectacular acts, and—"

But the gaze of the owner of the World's Greatest cut him short. By some sort of mental telepathy, the little man could tell that Blain was seeing beneath the surface, that his round eyes were divining the suffering in the other man's soul, the suffering of memory, of living again the agony of the blackest day of his life that he might repay a kindness, that he might not be "charity."

"I don't guess we'll do that act, Patterson."

"Yes sir, Mr. Blain. Thank you, Mr. Blain." And the little man hurried back to the corner of the arena, to break into splinters the structure he had built. Gathering up the broken bits of the box, he tossed them away as he went under the side-wall and hurried for the cars.

Four days later a mysterious word passed around the circus—in spite of more rain, in spite of dwindling crowds, the treasury-wagon was paying salaries again.

"The old man's dug up an angel somewhere," came the explanation. "With what money's coming in at the gate, it'll keep things running for a week or two, anyway."

And it was during this time of grace that the figure of Meg Patterson could

be seen each afternoon at the entrance to the circus lot, watching, watching for the crowds that did not come. . . .

Then out of a clear sky, it happened! The throngs were thick on the streets as the parade wound its way along, throngs which did not turn from the patched-together, unpainted spectacle with jeers. Here and there the balloon-venders made their way, with constantly increasing sales. A throng of boys a half-block long followed the shrieking, untuned calliope. Stores were closed; people were laughing; farmers from the surrounding countryside ate their lunches from baskets as they watched the parade, then hurried for the street-cars which would carry them to the lot.

"It's a maiden!" shouted an outsider happily as he passed the lion cage in which Meg sat. "There aint been a circus here for eight years. We're due for a killing."

"It's the turning-point!" Meg Patterson shouted back, a queer, strained tone in his voice. "I knew it was coming—I knew it was—"

"Hope so. Drop out o' that cage at the next corner and stick down here at the car-line. Better get all the nickels we can gather while the gatherin's good. Do a bit o' spielin' at the car-line—get me? This way to the street-cars for the circus, and all that stuff."

"Yes sir." There was alacrity in the little man's voice. "I'll drop out, sir."

FOUR hours later Meg Patterson was still at that corner, his voice hoarse, his face red, still shouting as the last of the stragglers veered toward the loading point:

"Here y'are—these cars to the circus grounds. Greatest show on earth—this way to the grounds—take your street-cars here!"

Ten minutes more, and he looked toward the sky with a sudden apprehension. The brilliancy of the sun had departed, giving way before dull-gray clouds.

"But I don't think it'll rain," he murmured prayerfully. "They're just clouds—no water in 'em. This way to the circus grounds—this way—right this way—greatest show on earth—"

Then he glanced toward a jeweler's clock down the street and gasped. Twenty minutes past two—out at the lot, the show was on! There would be just time for him to dress, to superintend the erection of the arena, and then—Major must act this afternoon as he never had acted before!

A street-car ground around the curve and Patterson boarded it, waiting anxiously for the conductor to give the bell. But that official was leaning far out the vestibule.

"Hey, kid," he shouted to a hurrying newsboy just crossing the street, "got one of them extries?"

"No," came the shrilling answer. "Just goin' after 'em."

The conductor leaned back and jerked the bell. Then he turned to Patterson.



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"Know what the exty's about?"

"Extra? No. Didn't know there was one." Then, with a sudden sinking at his heart: "Nothing wrong out at the circus grounds, is there?"

"Search me. Heard the kids yelling down the street and tried to flag one of 'em, but didn't have any luck."

But Patterson was already halfway to the front of the car—that he might gain the first possible view of the circus lot and assure himself that there all was well. A glimpse was enough!

The stragglers still were going through the front gates. The approach to the midway, before the side-shows, was massed with hangers-on, those who either did not care to go to the main show, or who had saved that adventure for the night. Sounded the blaring of the circus band. All was well, and Meg Patterson skirted the menagerie tent, then the big top, and diving under the mass of ropes and side-walling, hurried for his little trunk in the dressing-room. Five minutes later he was out, to stand looking at the glowering sky for a moment, then to hasten within the big top and oversee the setting up of the steel arena.

But he could not turn his eyes from the sight about him. The crowds were everywhere, packed on the "blues," filling even the aisles of the "reserves," flooding over against the bandstand, and even surging outward into the hippodrome track, where sweating, shouting roustabouts, in long, grinning lines, had plastered the earth a foot thick with straw, that the overflow might have seating place. Even to the ring-curbs were they jammed—the outpouring of what is known in show parlance as a "maiden town," a place starved for years for the sight and the hazy happiness of a circus. It was like wine to Meg Patterson—the wine of memory. Blain, grumbling, big-hearted Blain, had been given another chance! The money within that tent this day would mean another week's reprieve before the end; and so many things can happen in a—

A whistle sounded across the way, the signal of the equestrian director for the change of acts, and Meg Patterson hurried into the steel arena to receive old Major as he came from the runway of his cage. At one side a chandelier-man, summoned hastily by the darkness which had followed the clouds, was placing the last of the mantles upon the feed-lines which led from the heavy gasoline center-pole lights. The lion came into the arena, and Meg Patterson, with a crack of his whip, bowed to the first appreciative audience of the season.

"Major, old boy!" he whispered as he followed the great Nubian to its pedestal. "Work today as you never worked before! Work, Major—work!"

AT the center-pole just beside the arena a pulley began to creak as the chandelier-man started the great bunch-light upward, its reflected glare casting weird, writhing shadows about the arena. Meg Patterson worked on, sending his lion first into one stunt, then into another. Higher went the lights, still higher; and then—

A popping snap. A cry. A sudden scurrying leap on the part of the lion, an

uneasy, rumbling roar. The plunging shadows of many forms—the echoes of far-away shouts, and following this—pandemonium!

For just a second the bunch of lights, with its heavy tank above, had hung by a strand of the broken rope. Then down it had crashed to the ground, to splutter, and then to burst in an all-pervading spray of fire as the seams of the tank parted. The panic-ridden throngs about the hippodrome track surged to their feet in frenzied attempts at flight. Almost before he realized what had happened, Meg Patterson looked out upon a suddenly seething ring of flames—burning gasoline had struck the foot-deep straw of the hippodrome track in a hundred places. The big top was doomed.

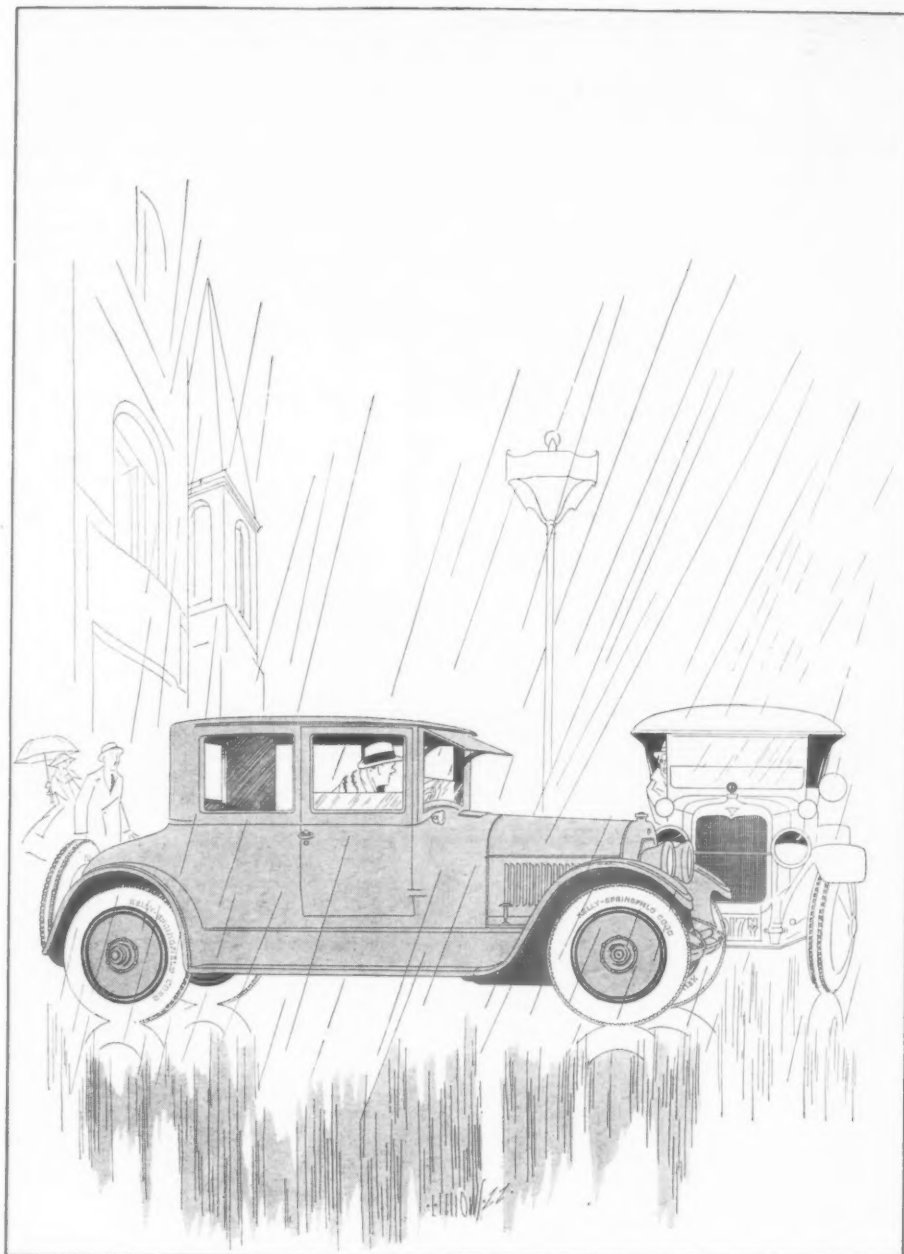
Doomed on the very day that it had been given a new chance for existence—doomed while massing thousands screamed and fought and clattered about the seats in an attempt at safety! Doomed, while within a steel arena, a little man leaped into activity before a suddenly frenzied lion, a little man who shouted and cracked his whip, and brought forth as a last resort his blank-cartridged revolver, to blind with powder and wadding the only thing left him in the world.

VAGUELY as he circled the arena, he glimpsed the seething scene about him, the packed masses of the seats, the vignettes of terror that stood forth here and there—a thin, frail woman, high on the nearest section of reserves, striving to herd near her a group of children; an old man with a little white-haired woman in his arms, struggling vainly for a footing, where packed humanity had made a footing impossible; the fright-frozen features of a child; the snarling visage of a coward and the swift lunge of his body as he struck a weaker person from his path—picture after picture snapped before him out of the vast panorama of the mob, pictures which he saw without realizing, as he moved about the steel-barred inclosure, keeping his lion ever before him, ever within reach of his heavy bull-whip, that absolute rebellion be held in check. For Major had gone mad—not with fear, but with an insane, insatiable desire to break through the bars which held him and plunge into that ring of flame and smoke beyond!

Time after time the beast smashed against the bars and recoiled, only to leap again, while the trainer's whip curled about him. Again and again—while the fire swept farther into the tent, pursuing consciously, it seemed, the crowds that now were plunging through the side-walls, and even tearing their way through the rotten canvas at the eaves, that they might break through to safety!

Fifty feet away a tier of the reserves crashed, but Meg Patterson could only hear. The smoke had closed in now—the air was heavy with the fumes of burning gasoline, of scorching canvas and flaming straw. The trainer cupped his nostrils in the hollow of one elbow. The lion roared and plunged with greater frenzy, but still the trainer beat him back.

"Somebody tear off that tent-top!" he shouted. "Let some air in here—let some



"Well!"

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air in here! Do you want everybody to suffocate?"

But ten thousand others were shouting also—his cry was but a whisper.

"Easy, Major, old boy!" he screamed. "Don't get scared, there—if we've got to go, it's best we go it together. Don't you understand, old fellow—huh? Back there, now—back there!"

FOR he had noticed, with a sudden glance of fright, that the barricade of the arena was slowly giving way—at the doorway a bale of straw was burning fiercely, its tongues of flame lashing at the leather straps which acted in place of a lock at the arena door. Once they were gone—

With his hands he strove to beat out the blaze. The fumes cut his lungs, and the heat drove him back. A surging leap, and the lion again struck the bars, recoiled, then skirted the arena again and again, roaring and hissing, clawing and tumbling, a frenzied, trapped thing. With a gasp Meg Patterson realized the reason.

His act! The act to which he had been trained—to rush to fire whenever he saw it, to seize whatever he found there, and to drag it forth! His old act flooding back upon an animal brain in a sudden reflex that crazed him with a desire to go on—no matter what the consequences. Double fears now swept the heart of the little man—fears for the beast that he knew would rush to its death the minute that flaming door swung open, fears for the maddened crowd: fire was enough, without the added danger of a crazed lion! Again he forced

the frantic beast into retreat; again he shouted, his voice weak in the crackle of breaking planks, of screaming thousands, of snapping flames, for even the seats and center-poles were burning now. But nevertheless it was a shout with a command in it, still a power in spite of its faintness:

"Back there—back there, Major, before I blind you! Back, I tell you, back!"

A minute passed—two, three. About the arena a black splotch appeared—the charred remains of a fire-base. At the door a slight clink sounded, and Meg Patterson whirled. The straps were gone at last—the door was swinging slowly open.

A tawny thing shot past him, and sprang through the doorway toward the ring of flame, to claw at it in frenzy as it seared his flesh, to swerve, to circle—then to stop short in puzzled tensivity. From somewhere beyond, a cry had come, the cry of a child—such a cry as had always come, back in the old days when the lion's duty was to leap through the flames to a child waiting in a little house-like structure where red fire was burning! A second later, Meg Patterson, plunging forward, saw the great beast leap into the mass of planks where a section of the seats had fallen, and scramble there a second, forcing the massed debris aside with great sweeps of its claws. Then Meg saw Major turn, and drag forth in his teeth a tiny, screaming human form—a form whose hands were extended in terror, and whose clothing smoldered.

"Major!" Meg Patterson screamed. "Major—here—here! Major!"

For an agonized second the lion did not seem to hear. Again the little trainer shrilled his command, and with a sudden inspiration, raced toward the side-wall and ripped a great length of it from its fastenings.

"Major—Major! Hear me! Major!" Thereupon the lion swerved, out of the ring of fire, out of the zone of danger, and still with the dress of the child between its teeth, came forward. Quickly yet carefully, the little trainer darted toward it. A second later, and he had grasped the child from the gentle jaws of the lion, and wrapping it tight in a piece of side-wall, smothered the smoldering garments. Shifting his burden to the hollow of one arm, and grasping the coughing, gasping lion by its heavy mane, he dragged Major out into the open.

"Get a shifting-den!" he ordered vaguely of the first passing workman. "Get a shifting-den—hear me? I'll hold him—but hurry. I don't know how long he'll stay quiet."

A rush, a sally, and Major was safe, and Meg Patterson's arms were empty.

"**N**OW, if it'd only been a millionaire's kid," said a voluble, smoke-blackened roustabout as he paused beside the little trainer, "twouldn't have been so bad. But nothin' ever turns out right in real life—course it had to be an orphan out of that bunch a woman brought to the show today. Aint no reward in rescuin' orphans."

"Yes—I remember. I saw them just when the fire started. She was trying to herd them together." Meg Patterson, seated on a pile of salvaged seat-planks, gazed first toward the blackened shell of what once had been a big top, then downward at his empty arms. "I guess you're right. There aint much reward in anything, any more."

The roustabout moved on. But Meg Patterson continued to stare at his still curved but empty arms.

Arms as empty as the future! The present and future and past were all one now—the circus was gone; the chances of livelihood had traveled the way of the flame-scarred center-poles and burned canvas.

"Seen Blain?" The manager paused in passing.

"No—no sir." Meg Patterson looked up vaguely. "I aint seen—"

"Looking for you. He's in the treasury-wagon. Better hike over there."

"Yes sir." A haggard, broken little old man rose from the pile of planks and moved slowly across the lot. At the door of the treasury-wagon he halted, but the fat man within beckoned him.

"Want you to take charge of the building up of the menagerie, Patterson, when we open up again," came in short, jerky sentences.

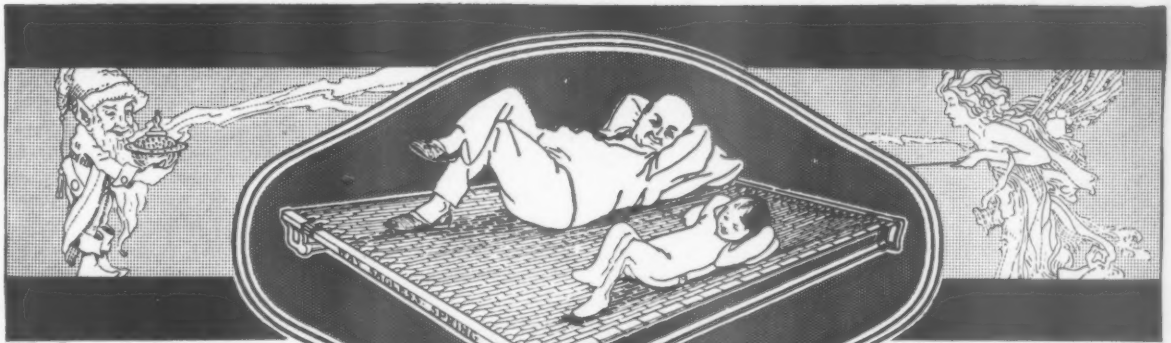
Patterson stared. "Yes sir."

"And I guess you'd better pension that lion of yours. He's earned it."

"Yes sir. But—"

"Grab a rattler tonight for Cincinnati and see what they've got at Howden's. Want a bunch of big stuff—elephants, a tiger-act or two, some polar bears and—"

"But sir—"



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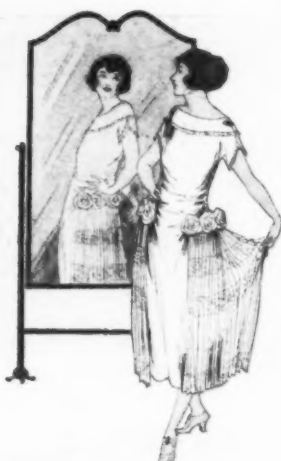
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"Oh, I forgot. Money, huh? What'll you need? Thousand or so?" He wrote on a tab. "King'll give it to you as soon as he gets back. I—"

"But sir—I—I—don't understand."

"Understand what? About your money? Now, look here, Meg." The bulbous Blain jabbed a cigar at him. "I'm not going to give you back your money. Get that?"

"Why, no sir—that is—"

"You'd act in the same fool way about it that you did before. The insurance company paid you that money, and you're entitled to it. But I guess if you had it again, you'd feel the same way. So you're not going to get it. That money's gone—hook, line and sinker. Understand that? You're not going to see that principal again as long as this is the World's Greatest. All for the simple reason that I've doubled it and put it into the show itself. All you'll get is the dividends—which ought to be plenty if people like a big show! Listen, boy!" He leaned forward in beaming enthusiasm. "I'm going to have an opéra as is an opéra! Biggest parade that you ever set your eyes on. Animal-acts by the wholesale. And aërials—say, man, that's where I'm shouting. The Wards, the Clarkonians, the Bentons, Mademoiselle Lietzell, the Gandells, the—"

"But sir,"—and this time Meg Patterson queried it all in a breath,—“where's it all to come from? Where's the money?”

"Money?" The round eyes of Blain

popped slightly. "Money? Aint you read the papers?"

"No sir."

"Huh!" The circus owner reached into a pocket and jingled a few coins there. Then he leaned back and slowly puffed a series of rings toward the ceiling. "Wildest day the New York stock exchange has known in twenty years. Steel jumped from seventy to ninety-eight! And I crawled out—seeing I'd bought at eighty! Thought you'd read it."

BUT Meg Patterson had ceased to listen. Something like a smile was flickering at the corners of his lips; involuntarily his hands opened, as though about to clasp a human form. Vaguely, uncertainly he stood there, while Blain of the World's Greatest gave an order.

"Soon's you get that expense-check, you'd better make your reservations. And understand, I want big stuff—tiger-acts, elephant-acts, polar bears—"

"Yes sir—yes sir." But still he stood there, his arms half raised, the flicker of his lips growing stronger, happier. "And sir—would you mind if I took a little girl with me, providing I can get the papers made out in time? You see, sir, Major gave me back something today—it'd only be half-fare and—"

"Huh?" Blain puffed again and grumbled more than ever. "Take somebody with you? What the hell are you asking me about it for? You're part owner of this show, aint you?"

THE STOVE

(Continued from page 71)

He had turned from her again and was gazing down the trail. After a moment he said: "There's coffee on the back of the stove, and some corn bread. You'd better eat it. I've had some."

She obeyed meekly. Something strange and stormy was shaking her; she had no name for it. The food choked her, hungry as she was, but she ate it obediently.

She had scarcely finished when he called her, and she joined him at the door. Something in his voice thrilled her; she saw in him again that strange and threatening immobility of the night before.

He said swiftly: "You're lookin' for your brother to come back?"

"Yes, yes. Any time."

"With another man?"

"With the doctor. Why?"

He raised his arm and pointed. In the blinding dazzle of sun on snow she saw two small dark figures rounding the curve of the trail.

Her heart rose and flooded her with a passion of thankfulness. She said quietly after a minute: "Yes. Yes, it's Garth and the doctor. Now—now you'll let him thank you, as you wont let me—"

Her words ended almost in a question, for she saw that, while she had been eating, he had taken up rifle and snowshoes.

He swung upon her suddenly, one would have said savagely, but that he was laughing. Those two black figures

down the trail were sweeping rapidly nearer. All the latent fierceness of the man had flamed into being at their approach. He laid a hard, slim hand on Dorette's shoulder and turned her so that, at less than arm's-length, she faced him. He said softly, in the midst of his almost noiseless laughter: "I'll show you how you can thank me."

She looked up at him, her face colorless, her lips parted. In the shadow of the hood his eyes gleamed at her, his face bent nearer. The world fell away from her; there was nothing left in life then but that face, that voice.

"Who are you?" she breathed.

He looked swiftly from her to the two figures down the trail. They were coming on fast. He seemed to be measuring the distance between himself and them.

When they were so near that their faces were all but discernible, he caught the girl to him. She was slack in his hold; all her life seemed to be in her dazed eyes; she would have fallen but that he held her with an arm like a steel bar. Twice and three times he kissed her.

"That's how you can thank me!" He released her, still laughing.

She staggered, her hands over her red mouth. With the movement of release he thrust her, rough and swift, within the door of the cabin. A bullet sent a spray of dusty snow over him. In one reeling instant she saw Garth kneeling down on the trail, his rifle leveled for another shot; the other, a laughing

GETTING THIN TO MUSIC

Reducing Reduced to a Science

ARE you bulky of body, and heavy of heart? Would you really like to reduce? Will you accept without cost the proof that you can? Then read what this man has done! Not long ago, in Chicago, it was stated that the scientific secret of weight regulation had been discovered. Wallace, a leading physical director, had worked seventeen years to make the announcement. But it did not take long to prove it was true.

UNDER observation of the press, he took fifty persons, each at least 50 lbs. overweight. Pictures and weights were published daily. In exactly forty days, every member of the class was down to normal weight and measurements! Nothing so crude as starving was employed; the method lets one eat. In fact, Wallace's success in reducing is due to his discovering that food does not cause fat. When you stop and think, some of the most humorously fat folks eat less than a child. Wallace simply found a way to prevent the system from turning too much of what is eaten, into fat. His course gives you things to do—to music—which makes your system use every bit of nourishment for blood, bone and sinew. Nothing is left from which to make fat. Getting thin to music is simple enough, but results are fairly astounding.

THIS interesting course has reduced thousands of women living in all parts of the U. S. Most of them had tried other means of losing weight without success. A typical example is Mrs. Grace Horschler, who resides at 4625 Indiana Ave., Chicago. She weighed 242 lbs. and in four months reduced to 168 lbs. This loss of seventy-four pounds was accomplished solely by Wallace's reduction records, sent her by mail. Because of the natural method of reducing, her body was left symmetric, firmly moulded. A hundred similar instances are on record, while the loss of fifteen, twenty or thirty pounds seems mere play; innumerable women have reported reductions of these amounts. Every mail brings new letters of appreciation.

GET thin to music, and Nature will make your bodily proportions normal, and keep them so. For this remarkable reduction course on phonograph records—set to music—brings instant and permanent results. As the



He makes them thin to music. A close-up of Wallace, a physical director now nationally known for his discovery of an unfailing, scientific method of reducing weight. It is done to music. His phonographic reduction records are sent everywhere.

knowledge of it grows, the number of women who carry a burden of excessive flesh will grow visibly less. Distance is no obstacle, for the lessons are sent everywhere. One's own phonograph is all the equipment needed. No incentive to keep at the course is required—it is all too novel and interesting to be a task. The course is full of surprises, and results come very quickly.

YOU may test this wonderful method of reducing without paying a penny. Wallace will reduce you five pounds *free*. He will do it in five days' time! You don't have to agree to take the course. You don't have to send any money. He will send postpaid, plainly wrapped, a full-sized regular reducing record and instructions. All he asks is to try it. For your own sake, don't doubt what he can do—for his method has proved unfailing. Women of every weight, height, and age have been rid of their fat as if by magic.

How can anybody who really wishes to get thin decline such an offer of proof! Clip or tear off the coupon below; fill it in now; mail it today.

WALLACE, 630 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago: Please send record for first reducing lesson, free and prepaid. I will either enroll or return your record at the end of five-day trial. (202)

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Are you a sensitive person?

NATURALLY, you are. Every person of culture and refinement possesses those finer sensibilities that mark the gentleman and gentlewoman.

And particularly are such people sensitive about the little personal things that so quickly identify you as a desirable associate—socially or in business.

Attention to the condition of your breath ought to be as systematic a part of your daily toilet routine as the washing of your face and hands. Yet how many, many men and women neglect this most important item!

The reason is a perfectly natural one. Halitosis (or unpleasant breath, as the scientific term has it) is an insidious affliction that you may have and still be entirely ignorant of.

Your mirror can't tell you. Usually you can't tell it yourself. And the subject is too delicate for your friends—maybe even your wife or husband—to care to mention to you. So you may unconsciously offend your friends and those you come in intimate contact with day by day.

Halitosis (unpleasant breath) is usually temporary, due to some local condition. Again it may be chronic, due to some organic disorder which a doctor or dentist should diagnose and correct.

When halitosis is temporary it may easily be overcome by the use of Listerine, the well-known liquid antiseptic, used regularly as a gargle and mouth-wash.

Listerine possesses unusually effective properties as an antiseptic. It quickly halts food fermentation in the mouth and dispels the unpleasant halitosis incident to such a condition.

Provide yourself with a bottle today, and relieve yourself of that uncomfortable uncertainty as to whether your breath is sweet, fresh and clean—Lambert Pharmaceutical Company, Saint Louis, Missouri.

For
HALITOSIS
use
LISTERINE



shadow, was slipping from her hands, from her life, into the shadow of the forest from which he had come.

Another shot, wide of the mark; Garth leaped to his feet again and charged toward her, followed by the doctor who was to save Derek, and whom he had found, at last, thirty miles beyond Mandore. But she had no eyes for them—for a moment, no heart.

Eyes and heart were on that other figure at the edge of the trees, swift, laughing, calling to her with raised hand:

"Tell him you were kissed by Maxime Dufour!"

When Garth reached her side she was on her knees, laughing, sobbing and striving, with her scarred small hands, to obliterate his trail in the snow.

THE QUARTER-MILLION NOTE

(Continued from page 47)

"That you, Hapgood? Hello." He ascended the steps and held out his hand. "You haven't been over in a long while. Nor the Missus, either."

"Well—" Hapgood found nothing to say.

"Ought to been over to the Yacht Club. There's about two hundred yachts of all classes in the harbor for the regatta tomorrow. Great sight. Come in and have a drink."

"Thanks. I might have one. Been taking a drive; thought I'd drop in a minute." Hapgood bit his lips. This was not exactly what he had intended to say; neither was his manner that which he had rehearsed.

In the library Fletcher grinned at him over the siphon.

"How do you feel about the *Wanderer* tomorrow? Want to bet?"

"Bet!"

"Sure. There's going to be wind, tomorrow. You'll have a good chance, Hapgood."

"Where do you suppose I'll get any money to bet?"

Fletcher raised his glass and sipped the tingling contents.

"Bad as that, eh?"

"Mr. Fletcher, I've been trying to tell you all week how bad things are. But you—"

"Told you to tell it to Sweeny, eh?" Fletcher laughed.

"Well, to Hutchinson," smiled Hapgood, taking hope from the man's good-humor. He leaned forward seriously. "I hadn't done anything to offend you, had I?"

"No. Why?"

"Well—you wouldn't see me."

"To tell the truth, Hapgood, I was kind of bored about that note. You see we've already renewed it twice."

"I know. But you know what business conditions are. You know we are perfectly good for—"

"You told all this to Hutchinson, didn't you, Hapgood?"

"Why, yes."

"What did he say?"

"I—I—" Hapgood gestured, fighting a sinking feeling. "I assumed he had told you he decided against me."

"Well then—" Fletcher waved his cigar. "Hutchinson is a man of shrewd judgment. That is his chief value to us."

HAPGOOD for the moment could think of nothing else to say. At length he shifted in his chair.

"I came over tonight, Mr. Fletcher, to ask you, if you haven't got anything

against me personally, why I am being treated this way."

"Personal!"

"Well, I couldn't imagine any other reason, Mr. Fletcher."

"No imagination was required, old boy. All you had to do was to face facts. Personally, I like you; you're a good fella. But look at it the other way; I mean from the bank's side. Looks to us, sort of, that you had slipped us a frozen loan."

Hapgood sprang to his feet, but before he spoke he sat down.

"I don't think you really mean that, Mr. Fletcher. I—"

"Wait a bit; hold on. As conditions are, it strikes me you should have met that note. We need the money. We have only so much to lend; we must take care of our customers. Besides, we have our Federal Reserve line to think about. There is a limit to the amount of money we can rediscount."

"Our only trouble, Mr. Fletcher, is bad collections," Hapgood broke in. "That is all. Corporations that used to pay right on the nail are hanging off month after month. And that has prevented us from taking a lot of big orders we could get—and will get later. How would it be if I found I could raise half? Would you renew the balance for ninety days?"

"Sorry, Hapgood—" The man's voice was crisp. "At the last meeting of the Board all our various large loans were overhauled and it was decided there should be no renewals."

"Mr. Fletcher," Hapgood rose and stood over the banker,—"do I understand that you intend to put us in the position of being financially embarrassed—with disastrous results to you as well as to us?"

Fletcher raised his hand.

"If the statement concerning your company which you gave Hutchinson is correct you are certainly not insolvent. You must have means of raising the money to meet that note. If you haven't, then we'll take whatever loss comes to us, thankful we didn't let you go on and stick us worse."

Hapgood's voice caught.

"That—that is final?"

"Well, it's final for tonight. Get out and hustle. See what you can do if your hand is called on Monday."

"If—I—" Hapgood studied the man's face, almost afraid to believe that the veiled expression betokened a possible leniency. "You mean—"

Fletcher frowned a moment into his glass.

Business is Cutting Out the Deadwood

Will You Stand or Fall?

In practically every office in the country axes are flying. Yesterday, your job was secure—you did good work, your employers liked you. Business was booming.

Today, every man employed in business is compelled, in effect, to answer this searching question:

Can this organization get along without me?

And inevitably, thousands upon thousands of untrained men are being handed the blue envelope.

Difficult to replace them? Not for a moment.

Just a half-inch ad in the morning paper, offering a routine job, and half a hundred applicants will stand in line. Almost any man in line can fill it well.

Dangerous days—for the man who lacks specialized business training!

Are You Timber—or Deadwood?

"Cut out the deadwood"—this is the cry in these "dangerous days"—but note this inconsistency:

You, let us say, are one of several million men in this country doing routine clerical work. You are efficient—but easy to replace.

On the very day that the big concern lets you go, along with a score of other men who have not equipped themselves for the emergency, what is that concern likely to do?

—To advance a \$5,000 man to \$7,500, and quite possibly to hire one or two new men, at from \$5,000 to \$10,000 each! Here is how and why. It's logical.

Humphreys, let us say, is an expert accountant—thoroughly capable at handling the intricate problems of corporate organization, finance, cost finding, auditing, credits, etc. A rival concern comes bidding for his services. Humphreys is too valuable to part with. Up goes his salary to \$7,500—and Humphreys puts GENERAL AUDITOR on his door.

Bogart has been acquiring the knack of writing powerful sales and collection letters. No price is too high for that ability. The position of Correspondence Supervisor is created, and Bogart starts at \$5,000 a year.

Addison has been mastering traffic in his spare time. He has shown his company a way to save several thousand dollars on a single shipment. Addison is lifted out of a sixty-dollar job and made Traffic Manager, at a salary, to start, of \$100 a week. He is straight in line for a \$7,500 job.

Other men, as a result of the cutting out of deadwood, are each moved up a notch or two: Elliott to become Production Manager; Seaverns to take care of Sales; Johnson to become Office Manager—all at salaries from \$5,000 to \$10,000 a year.

Does this idea of swinging a \$5,000 or a \$10,000 job frighten you? Do you think these salaries beyond your reach?

Bear in mind that practically every man now swinging such a job once looked upon it as a castle in the air. The gap between \$25 a week and \$100 a week *always* looks stupendous—until the man has actually bridged it.

Then he perceives that the bridge is open to every man of average ability—and that the bridge in question is nothing in the world but specialized business training.

Wonderful days—these days when the deadwood is being hewn away and the timber stands in the clearing, straight and sound.

Wonderful days—but only for the man who can offer in the man-market SPECIALIZED BRAINS!

Prove Your Fibre in a Bigger Job

Once upon a time there was much mystery about how a man got the training he needed to put him in a big-pay job.

Home study training, under the LaSalle Problem Method, was new. Readers found it difficult to believe the stories of rapid advancement LaSalle members were telling. They did not appreciate the incomparable advantage a man enjoys when he is able to work, in effect, side by side with recognized authorities, and to master the *principles* of business by solving under their direction actual *problems* of business lifted bodily from business life.

Today the volume of proof is overwhelming. During three months' time, for example, 1,089 LaSalle members reported salary increases resulting from training under the LaSalle Problem Method totaling \$889,713, an average increase per man of 56 per cent. Not a day goes by at LaSalle but what a score of statements such as these are scattered thru the morning's mail:

"The most efficient and most rapidly promoted men in our whole organization are LaSalle-trained."

"Promoted to General Manager."

"Now a director in two banks."

"LaSalle service enabled me to save our firm \$3,988 on a single shipment of freight."

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"Passed bar examination with highest grade, in competition with many resident school graduates."

"The Problem Method increased my income \$2,500 a year."

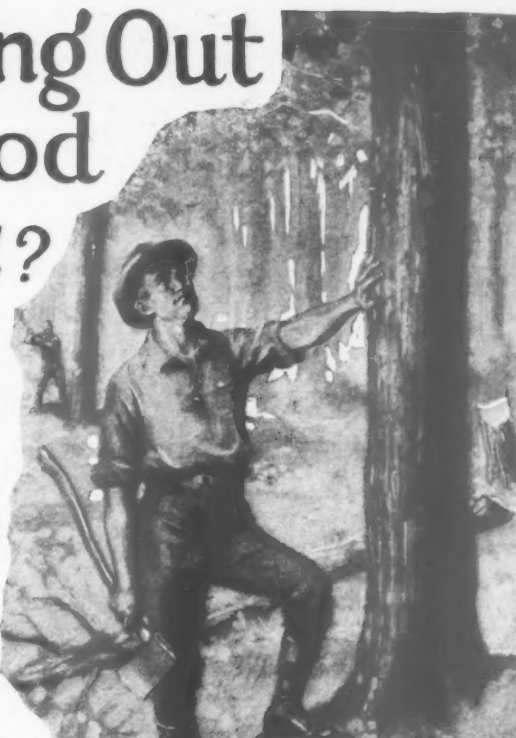
"Passed C. P. A. examination. You will be interested to know that 50 per cent of the successful candidates were LaSalle-trained men."

"Many promotions, and future now secure."

The only *mistake* a man can make in considering the LaSalle Problem Method—a mistake, however, which may sentence him for life to humdrum work at mediocre pay—is to let the days and months drift by without ACTING.

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Below is the coupon. Your fibre can be proved in the next five minutes—by what you do with it.



Facts About LaSalle

Founded in 1909.

Financial resources more than \$6,500,000. Total LaSalle organization exceeds 1500 people—the largest and strongest business training institution in the world.

Responsible for perfecting the "LaSalle Problem Method"—recognized as the quickest and most practical method of business training known to educational science.

Numbers among its students and graduates more than 500,000 business and professional men and women, ranging in age from 20 to 70 years.

Annual enrollment, about 60,000.

Average age of members, 35 years.

LaSalle texts used in more than 400 resident schools, colleges and universities.

LaSalle-trained men occupying important positions with every large corporation, railroad, and business institution in the United States.

LaSalle Placement Bureau serves student and employer without charge. Scores of big organizations look to LaSalle for men to fill high-grade executive positions.

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"You know, Hapgood, that we are sailing tomorrow for a cup offered by old Phineas Mennen. You know the feeling between the Allied Bankers Trust and the Shawnee National. Well, if I could win that five-thousand-dollar mug of Mennen's he'd die of apoplexy." Fletcher laughed. "When he offered the trophy he thought I wasn't going to put the *Sea Boy* in commission this year. As a matter of fact, I wasn't until I heard about the Mennen Cup."

"I see." Hapgood did see. The man's drift was perfectly clear.

"Well, then, you have it all. I want to win that cup. I'll laugh Mennen out of Wall Street. In fact, on Monday I'll be laughing so hard that it is possible you'll be included in the fun."

"You mean—"

"I mean that if the *Sea Boy* wins tomorrow, why, drop in and see me Monday about ten o'clock and we'll talk some more about this note business. Is that clear enough?" He yawned widely and reached out his hand. "Good night, Hapgood. Regards to the Missus."

Hapgood sprang forward and seized the hand warmly.

"Good night, Mr. Fletcher. And thank you."

Then as though fearing to depart with something less hopeful to carry with him through the night, he turned hastily away.

HE had not taken an overcoat. The air of the September evening had turned cool with the premature breath of autumn. As he left his car in the garage and walked along the pathway to the house he was shivering. He didn't know whether it was nervousness or a chill; a little of both perhaps.

Alison was in her room, reading. She laid aside her book as he peered through the door.

"Well, Jay—you were a long time."

As he entered the apartment she arose, expectant. He came to her and she threw her arms around him with quick sympathy.

"You poor boy. Just couldn't face him down, could you?"

His head fell upon her shoulder and rested there awhile. When he faced her, his lips were working.

"Alison, I—I think everything is going to be all right."

"Really, Jay!" She drew her head backward, studying him. "Just what do you mean?"

"Well," Hapgood shrugged,—"I don't quite know. He—he—well, Fletcher is dead set on winning that cup tomorrow. You see it is offered by Phineas Mennen, president of the Allied Bankers Trust. The two don't hitch and—" He hesitated.

A look of pain crossed Alison's face.

"You mean," she assisted, "that if you let him win that cup tomorrow he will extend your note?"

"He intimated that he probably would; yes."

Alison's arms slipped from his shoulders. "Do you really take much store by that? I don't; none at all."

"I've got to take store by it, Alison. It's the only chance."

"Jay, you mean to say you're going to throw that race to Fletcher?"

"Oh, I'm a pup, Alison—a plain yellow pup."

Her exclamation was sharp.

"I'm not going to have you say that, Jay Hapgood! I'm not going to have you even *think* it! I can't stand it. I simply can't. And I won't!"

"Money is money, Alison. Think it over."

"I've thought it over. Jay, what is the difference whether a chain about one's neck is made of regular links or dollar signs? In either case we are slaves. Well,"—her voice rose passionately,—
"we're going to break that chain."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I mean that you're going to sail that race tomorrow and you're going to beat Warren Fletcher so badly that he'll never dare look you in the face again. That's what I mean. That's just what I mean. And I'm going to sail with you and see you do it. I need to see you do it, Jay—need it like medicine."

"Alison, you're crazy."

"Am I? I wonder. Perhaps I am—if it is insanity to want to see my husband a man. Anyway it is up to you to choose whom you will please—Warren Fletcher, or your wife."

"Alison! Damn it!" Hapgood shook off the hand she had laid upon his arm and paced the room. "Haven't you any imagination? Do you know what it will mean if Fletcher should break us? Can't you picture it? Don't tell me you don't care for money—or at least for the things money will buy. For I know better. Play the game, girl, for the love of Heaven. Don't look at me that way. As for the race, it would not be the first time I've let him win."

"Ah, so you admit Captain Prentice told me the truth. It's harder, though, to hear it from you. I—" Her voice trailed away.

He sprang to her side.

"Don't look—don't act that way," he pleaded. "Pshaw! I was only playing the money game the way almost everyone plays it—who has to."

ALISON placed her hands again upon his shoulders.

"Jay, the only important thing in my life is whether you are going to keep on playing it."

"I have been playing it as much for you as for myself."

"More, perhaps," she replied evenly. "And it makes me sick. Count me out. I'll stand the gaff with you. All I want is my ideal of you, that's all. I want you to show fat old Fletcher that it takes more than money to make a man—or to unmake one."

Hapgood resumed pacing the floor.

"Do you want your wife's respect—or do you want Fletcher's favor? That is what you have to think about tonight, Jay." The quiver in her voice belied her unemotional demeanor. "Which is better worth keeping? You say I have no imagination. I have and you know it. But I want you to be free and I want to be. I want to love you as the best and biggest man in the world. For that I'll fight and, yes, starve and die."

"Gee, you're intense, Alison!"

"Yes, I am. Will you think it over?" He shrugged, turned toward the door—



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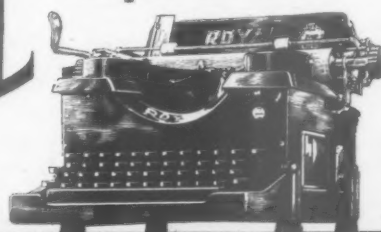
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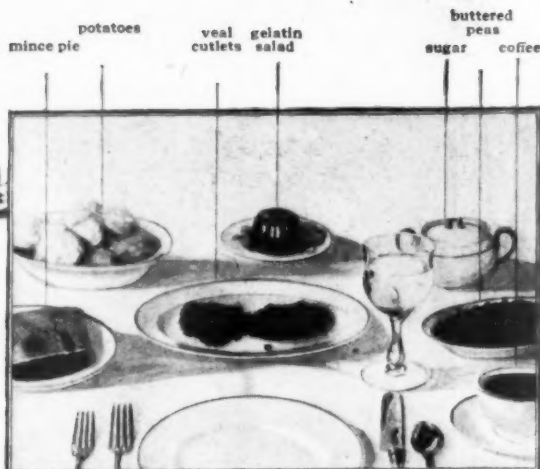
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The crime you commit against your body tissues

Each year over 100,000 men and women still young pay the penalty for this wrong habit of eating

VEAL cutlets, boiled potatoes, buttered peas, gelatin salad, mince pie and coffee—all good foods. Recognized by thousands of American families as a satisfactory dinner.

And yet this dinner, unless supplemented with certain vital food factors, is a crime against your body tissues. Because thousands do not supplement this diet with these factors they undermine their health and succumb to diseases which prove fatal.

Primitive man easily secured an abundance of vitamin and other necessary food factors from his fresh meats and green leafy vegetables. But our modern diet—refined and modified—too often lacks these vital elements.

Yet each one of us can make good this lack. By adding Fleischmann's Yeast to their daily diet, men and women all over the country are securing for themselves health and vigor.

They have better appetite and their digestion is greatly improved. They also find that waste matter is eliminated regularly and naturally as a result of supplementing their diet with Fleischmann's Yeast.

Fleischmann's Yeast is a fresh food. It contains in a natural form the elements

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Many like to nibble Fleischmann's Yeast from the cake a little at a time. Some prefer it spread on crackers or bread. Others take it in boiling hot water, still others like it in milk, fruit-juices, coffee or cocoa. It is very nourishing with malted milk drinks. You will grow to like its distinctive flavor just as you grew to like the taste of olives or oysters.

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FLEISCHMANN'S YEAST
corrects these wrong habits of eating

way of his room, faced about on the sill and regarded her in silence.

Then he went into his room and closed the door.

IT was a whippy afternoon. As Jay Hapgood and Alison stepped into the launch at the Yacht Club float a north-wester was snoring at the rate of twenty knots an hour, while the hard white clouds that scuttled across the sky hinted of more wind to come. Yachts were scudding with their lee rails awash, and the smoke of a Boston-bound freighter went flat back from her funnels.

"Did you ever see such a day?" Alison Hapgood, who had sailed a knockabout of her own in races throughout the summer, breasted the wind with sparkling eyes. Her husband nodded.

"Yes," he said, "one of those made-to-order days."

Now what did he mean by that? Alison asked herself the question and what seemed to be the correct answer came immediately. She smiled. They were seated in the Yacht Club launch which had to call to drop owners aboard. The *Wanderer* was reached last of all. Her lower sails were up and the seamen were breaking headsails out of the forward hatch when the launch came alongside.

Captain Prentice's eyes brightened as they rested upon the woman. He had pretty thoroughly acquainted himself with Alison Hapgood's sporting attitude toward the *Wanderer* and was glad to see her aboard.

"Well, Mrs. Hapgood, more than a toothful of wind today."

He shouldered a young seaman out of the way and personally assisted Alison up the short ladder to the deck. Then he returned to the owner.

"Are you going to steer today, Mr. Hapgood?"

Hapgood shook his head.

"No, you take the wheel."

The old sailorman gazed swiftly at the yachtman, then smiled. When left alone Prentice was a wicked sailor and wanted all that was coming to him. He walked to the shrouds and tested them, and as he saw Fletcher's *Sea Boy* scudding out toward the middle of the Sound under lower canvas, he gave the order to man the crotch-tackle and get up the anchor.

Five minutes later the *Wanderer* was thundering across toward Long Island in a grooming-up spin. It was a lumpy sea she traveled and the flawless deck glistened with water.

"Stand by for stays!" There was a quick dash of figures about the deck and then the big boat spun around as though she were a top.

"What a day, Jay!" Alison, her cheeks buried in her slicker, glanced at Prentice. "Do you suppose there'll be any reefing?"

"The *Sea Boy's* lower sails are full," replied the skipper. "I noticed she sent up working-topsails, though."

"Wonder old Fletcher didn't send up a club-topsail." Hapgood laughed. "I'll give him credit for sail-cracking."

The tone of the remark was balm to Alison Hapgood. It sounded as though he were regarding Fletcher as he would any racing man whom he was out to beat, irrespective of business or extraneous affairs of whatever sort.

Prentice caught it, too. He laughed and clashed his calloused palms together. "Anything Fletcher carries, we'll crack on, and don't forget that."

Alison came to her husband's side, and they stood together upon the tilted deck while a millrace of water hissed a yard or two beneath their feet. Alison's eyes widened. "Here comes the *Sea Boy*! Did you ever see anything so wonderful!"

She was wonderful. With her lee rail buried in water, her sails smooth and rigid as ivory, her bow wave rising over the deck, the *Sea Boy* seemed to be the very embodiment of driving power.

The schooner was on the starboard tack and if the helm was so held that her course would continue to converge upon that which the *Wanderer* was following, the Hapgood schooner would have to come about. For Fletcher's boat held the right of way.

Hapgood turned to Prentice.

"Do you think we can slip across her bows, Captain?"

Prentice shifted the wheel, giving his sails more of an angle to the wind. Over she went, the water boiling high on deck.

"What do you think, Prentice?" Hapgood's voice was sharp.

"There's a chance," was the grim reply.

On came the *Sea Boy*. A hail rang out from her deck. But Prentice's hands were rigid, motionless upon the wheel. The boom of the *Sea Boy's* canvas, the rush of water under the bow, was now loud in the ears of those upon the *Wanderer's* deck. The swiftly advancing bowsprit was now a pitiless engine of destruction. There came another hail.

Then cleanly as a rabbit dives into cover the *Wanderer* flashed past the venomous nose-pole with not three feet to spare and was clear.

For a minute every face on the *Wanderer* might have been that of a graven image. Then came a flash of exultation.

"Gee!" Hapgood turned to his wife. "Wonder what that did to the nerves of the *Sea Boy* crowd?"

ALISON'S eyes blazed with fiery exultation. But she checked the words and her grip upon Hapgood's arm relaxed.

"I suppose," she said, "they are asking the same thing about us."

"I suppose so." Unconsciously Hapgood was beating his closed fist upon his palm.

And now the various smaller classes of racers—such of them at least, as cared to face the strenuous conditions—were being sent over the starting line. The time was drawing near when *Sea Boy* and *Wanderer*, the only two representatives of the ninety-foot class which had decided to risk sail and spar and hull, were to get away.

The preparatory and warning signals had already blown. Hapgood stood poised with stop-watch in hand.

Prentice glanced inquiringly at him.

"The *Sea Boy* is going to lug everything."

"All right." Hapgood's jaws were set. His eyes were stern. "Tell them to sheet out the main-topsail; set the fore-top-sail. Break out the baby-jib as we go over."



The right and the wrong way to manicure

JUST as many people spoil their nails by mistakes as by neglect. No matter how careful you are, you simply cannot cut the cuticle without causing it to look ragged and unsightly.

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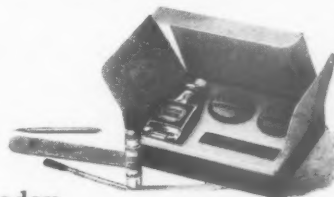
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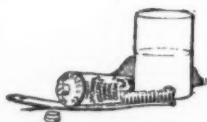


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Truth in advertising implies honesty in manufacture

"Good!" Alison's voice rose shrilly as Prentice roared down the deck.

"Ten seconds!" Hapgood's eyes were riveted upon his watch. "Five seconds!"

THE baby-jib flashed out, fluttered wildly, and was trimmed down flat. There came a puff of smoke, but the sound of the starting whistle was blown away on a gust of wind. Over went the *Wanderer* to her lee rail, a green bow wave rising high and water boiling up on the after-deck, pulling at the feet of those who stood about the wheel. The tossing regatta-committee tug flashed by and was gone.

"A half-minute on the *Sea Boy* at least!" Hapgood grinned at his skipper, his eyes sparkling at the triumph of getting away first.

And so through the roaring wind the two schooners sped for the windward mark twelve miles away. Eyes strained ahead, Hapgood sought to pick up the mark, while his wife, leaning forward, her hands upon his shoulder, tried to assist his vision. Presently they made out the cone flashing out its heliographic rays in the midst of the waters. Not far astern and a little out to windward the *Sea Boy* came on, with a roaring torrent to leeward. Hapgood glanced at Prentice, pointing ahead. The man nodded.

"I see it!" He raised his head. "Stand by for a jibe!" he roared.

Like monkeys the white-clad sailors rose from the deck and sought their positions, and then at a sharp order bent to the work of getting the main sheet in. In the fore-truck the mast-head man was clewling up the fore-topsail while Prentice, steering skillfully, kept the wind on the end of the main boom.

Up came the turning mark as though it were advancing to the schooner under power. The skipper's booming voice tore down the deck.

Whang! The big boom swung over while canvas thundered and blocks rattled.

"*Sea Boy* has jibed." Hapgood glanced at his stop-watch. "Forty seconds. We gained ten seconds on that leg. We will show her something on the beat to windward."

His wife said nothing, but her eyes were glowing. A flaw struck the *Wanderer* and she heeled so sharply as to lose speed. On came the *Sea Boy*, but the *Wanderer* squared up finely and boomed on her way just as the rival boat was preparing to shoot across her bows. A wild yell fluttered from the *Wanderer's* crew as they saw the *Sea Boy* pay off preparatory to coming about in acknowledgment of her failure to pass in front of the *Wanderer's* plunging bowsprit.

Hapgood's face was drawn into the look of a savage animal at the moment of triumph.

"Now, Prentice, you see whose nerves went overboard back there before the start! You wait!"

TWENTY minutes passed. The *Wanderer*, still holding the windward berth, tacked to port to improve her position with reference to the still distant home mark and then ten minutes later came about once more, taking the wind over the starboard bow. Off to the westward they could see the *Sea Boy*,

lying over almost flat, making a long hitch on the port tack. Her course was converging toward that of the *Wanderer*.

"Look, Jay—" Alison pointed to the schooner. "She is going to try to cross our bow again."

"I know she is," Hapgood's voice was quiet. "I've been watching her. What do you think, Prentice?"

"She can't beat us unless she does cross and get to windward."

"Yes," Hapgood chuckled. "Maybe Fletcher thinks that everything that's happened so far is a mistake. By George! She's certainly coming on! All right, old boy!"

Closer came the two boats. *Wanderer* had the right of way, being on the star-board tack. She held every right that laws have ever prescribed.

"Damn him! Isn't he going about?" Hapgood's face had turned pale. Prentice, his grizzled jaws bulged, gripped the wheel and looked straight ahead; his steel gray eyes were hard, murderous. Hapgood sought his wife's face. Her eyes were those of a hunted animal. Unwavering, unblinking, they searched her husband's. He gestured irresolutely. He half-turned toward Prentice, then as though magnetically drawn, he met his wife's eyes again. Her white lips moved:

"Are—are you going to let Fletcher get away with this?"

PRENTICE caught the import of the words and glanced swiftly at the owner, whose teeth had bitten half through the stem of his pipe.

It was clear now that the *Sea Boy* could not cross the *Wanderer's* venomous bowsprit. But she was keeping on, coming at engine speed. It looked like a bluff—life or death. Hapgood had imagination, but indeed, it required little to picture what lay but a minute or two ahead unless one boat or the other threw down her cards. The stage was set for a frightful accident. His jaws relaxed; again he moved irresolutely.

"Jay!"

Hapgood, with a muttered imprecation, threw up his head.

"Give him the bowsprit, Prentice! Run him down!"

Prentice's face was set like the face of an executioner. Closer came the two boats. Hapgood seized his wife with a grip of steel and closed his eyes, as the clacking of the *Sea Boy's* tortured canvas and the rush of her bow through the waves sounded clear.

And then just at the last instant a sharp order came from the *Sea Boy's* stern. With lightning speed, the wheel of the Fletcher boat was eased off; she luffed and came almost to a full stop. For a moment it seemed as though she would foul the *Wanderer*, but nothing touched and the schooner sped on her way.

Hapgood caught a glimpse of Fletcher's haggard face, heard his voice shrill with curses.

"Hapgood, you—"

The owner of the *Wanderer* cupped his hands.

"You go to hell, Fletcher!" he roared.

Alison Hapgood touched her husband upon the shoulder and smiled as the *Wanderer* dashed for the home mark, a winner beyond peradventure.



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"Now you've done it."

"Done what?" His voice was harsh.

"I'll try to show you, Jay—I'll show you every day that we live!"

"WELL—!" At the float, as the launch, bearing Jay Hapgood and his wife, came alongside, Phineas Mennen, donor of the famous Mennen Cup, stepped to the edge and seized Hapgood's outstretched hand. "You put it over, my boy! Greatest race I ever saw. I—George! I never had my name on a better-won prize. Come here!"

"All right, just a moment, Mr. Mennen." Jay Hapgood reached down and assisted Alison to the float. Then he turned to the great man, who slipped an arm through his.

"Hapgood," he said, in his throaty voice, "I never felt better in my life. If that hard-boiled, thick-necked, money-juggler Fletcher had won that cup of mine, he'd have had the laugh on me for life. I wouldn't have had that happen for twenty-five thousand dollars."

"Oh—it's all right, Mr. Mennen." Hapgood's voice was sharp. What he had done he meant to stand by. He was glad he had done it. Just the same, he was in no mood for Mennen's selfish felicitations. "Thank you a lot." He was swinging away when the man caught him by the arm.

"Look here, my boy. Wait a minute. I appreciate the way you won that race today, Fletcher or no Fletcher. I heard some talk on the club veranda before the race of a little difference between you and Fletcher about a note. They were bettin' you'd let Fletcher beat you. A pot of money lost on that hunch today."

Hapgood shrugged. He was still under the spell of a tremendous experience.

"But," continued Mennen, "I backed you—because I knew your stuff. Now, as to that note of yours at Fletcher's bank—I don't know but that the Allied Bank-

ers—" He paused. "Just how much is that note, Hapgood?"

The breath seemed to have gone from Hapgood's body. He turned to the man, his lips moving inarticulately. Then, as warmth surged through him, he smiled.

"Why, only two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. You see, collections have been—"

"A quarter-million!" Mennen whistled.

"I see. H'm! Quarter-million, eh? Well, look here, Hapgood, you just go to Fletcher and put it up to him hard. I'll gamble he doesn't want to lose you."

The face of the younger man went pale.

"Why—why—I thought, perhaps, Mr. Mennen, that you might see your way clear to—"

"Not just now, Hapgood; not just now. Of course not. Fletcher is your—"

"I see. Thank you, Mr. Mennen." Hapgood withdrew his arm, stood a second as Mennen faced toward the float, and then, as one walking in a dream, he made toward the club veranda, where he could see his wife talking to a group of men and women.

He had just reached the top step when he heard his name called and found himself confronted by Warren Fletcher. Hapgood nodded stiffly.

"How are you, Mr. Fletcher?"

"Oh, all right—but wait a minute, Hapgood. You don't get off that way. That was a great race you sailed."

"Thank you."

"I—I saw you talking to that old crab, Mennen."

"Yes, you did."

"Butting in with business, I'll bet. Don't let that crook get his hooks onto you, Hapgood."

"I'm in no position to question Mennen's character, Fletcher. I must do business where I can."

Fletcher snarled.

"Don't do it, take it from me. As for

his old tin cup, I'm damned if I wanted to win anything with his name on it. You must have caught that from the way we sailed the race."

"Is that so?" Hapgood, throwing reserve to the winds, eyed the banker angrily.

"Don't go off your nut, Jay. Hold on a minute—I want to talk to you." He placed a heavy hand upon Hapgood's arm, leading him to a corner of the veranda.

"Hapgood, do you want to know why I was cagey about that loan of yours?"

Hapgood eyed the man, then slowly nodded.

"Well, then, I'll tell you: It was because I was afraid of you. I thought you had no spine and that you and your business were booked to go under just because of that."

"Why, you—"

FLETCHER interrupted with a guffaw.

"You've got to admit I had a license to think so, Hapgood. I like to be kowtowed to as well as any man—but, well, as I say, you owed a lot of money and you had me scared. I thought you didn't have the guts; get me?"

"Yes, I get you, Fletcher." Hapgood's voice was belligerent.

"All right. But today's race showed me I had the wrong dope. A man who will take the chances you did today is a man, Hapgood, a he-man—especially after the way I put things up to you last night."

"Thanks, Mr. Fletcher."

"Don't thank me, thank yourself. Anyway, keep away from Mennen. Drop in on Monday and we'll fix up that little note business."

"Mr. Fletcher—"

"It's all right, boy. We're always willing to string along with the game chaps. We'll string along with you and gamble till the cows come home. Get me, Hapgood?"

"I get you, Mr. Fletcher."

SOULS FOR SALE

(Continued from
page 54)

Thinking these things, Remember said: "I'd be jealous of your public, Tom. It is a big one, and you've got to be true to it. I suppose it's because I've got none of my own. I've hardly had a letter yet."

"That's because your first picture is only being released now. Just wait! You'll be snowed under."

"And would you like it if I read you a letter from some man in Oklahoma who had my picture on his bureau and kissed me every night good night?"

"No."

"Would you be jealous?"

"Yes! I'd want to kill him."

"Really?" There was a pleasant thrill in this—a thrill that will be a long time dying out of the female soul, the excitement of stirring up battle ardor in two or more males.

Remember went on, teasing yet exploring:

"And would you kill any man who put me on a shrine and worshiped me?"

"No. I'd realize that that was part of the penalty of loving a great artist.

There's a penalty about loving a stupid woman that nobody else cares for, too. I'd realize that you have a right to the world's love, and I'd be proud of you, however much it hurt. I shouldn't lift my finger to hamper your glory."

She was just about to kiss him lightly on the nearer ear for the fervor of the first part of his speech. But the last line checked her. There can never fail to be a little something disappointing about a love that is willing to share its prey with anyone else—even if it is with everyone else.

PERHAPS to punish this sickly saintliness, she now told him flatly that she was going to be Ned Ling's leading lady.

This hurt him as much as she hoped.

"It's a come-down for you," he said. "It's a setback. You'd have been the next big star in the emotional field. Now you'll be swallowed up in a comic two-reeler. Ling never gives anybody else any credit in his pictures. All you'll do will be to stand round and feed him."

"Feed him?"

"Yes, do things and say things that will give him a funny come-back."

This was a trifle dampening. If he had held to that line of argument, he might have turned her aside. But as always he had to say too much.

"Besides, as I told you, Ned Ling always makes love to his leading lady. He quarreled with the last one, Miss Clave, because she wanted more publicity. She wanted to get a laugh or two herself, and a line or two in the advertisements."

This stirred in Remember a double emotion, one of curiosity, one of self-confidence. She had had Ned Ling clinging to her fingers like a baby. She could wrap him round one of them, no doubt. Because Miss Clave failed, that did not prove that a wiser woman would.

Holby did not quite persuade her to refuse the opportunity with Ling, but he sent her to it with misgivings. He put a fly in the ointment. There are always flies in ointment.

A few days later a wasp fell into her

Pompeian Beauty Powder



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What is it they admire so much—the radiance of her lovely coloring? Yes, but even more the sparkle of her eyes, the glow of her expression, that come from knowing her skin is like a rose and that she is looking her very best.

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ointment. She received one of the first of the innumerable letters that were to swarm about her path.

Chapter Forty-nine

TIME in Southern California flew on wings that seemed never to change their plumage. At home in Calverly the birds put on their springtime splendor, lost it and flew away. The trees feathered out in leaves and in a courtship glory of blossoms, then lost all. The flower-bushes ran the same scale from shabbiness to brief beauty and back again. The very ground was brown, was green, was bald, was white with snow that went and came again.

But Los Angeles was always green. In December, March—always there were great roses glowing, often high up in some tree they had climbed.

Remember grew angry sometimes at the monotony of beauty. She read of blizzards in the East and North, and longed for a frostbite or the nipped cheeks of a Calverly winter. There was music even, in her memory, of the frozen snow that rang like muffled cymbals under her aching little feet as she ran to school pretending she was a locomotive and her breath the steam.

But this was only the fretfulness of the unconquerable human discontent. She had hated winter when it tortured her, and now the Californian paradise tortured her because it was winterless. Even in heaven the angels grew weary of golden and jasper architecture, and harp-music, and tried to change their government.

Discontent with the weather was only one of Remember's unhappinesses. Her ambition was ruthless and her critical faculty rebuked her. She prayed for opportunities for bigger rôles and blushed at her obscurity; yet when she saw her finished scenes, she suffered direfully because she had done them so ill. When her colleagues applauded her, she said her true thought when she answered: "It could have been done so much better. If only we could retake it!"

She was living the artist's life—goaded to expression, rejoicing in utterance and afterward anguished with regrets that she had not phrased herself a little differently.

As with every other artist in the world's history, her personality, her preferences, her very face and form offended many people. Nobody ever pleased everybody. She overheard harsh criticisms, or they were brought to her one way or another. They hurt her cruelly, and the more cruelly since it was her nature to believe them justified and even a little less than harsh enough.

Some happier natures than hers could always protect themselves by saying that the critic had a personal spite, or was a failure, venting the critic's own disappointment, or was too shallow to appreciate, or had been bribed. But Remember never could wrap her wounded soul in such bandages. She felt that the truth was worse than the worst she heard. She could always find some fault in her achievements that the critics had overlooked. She could not retake her

pictures, however, and when occasionally a scene had been shot over again and she could correct some fault, she always found another one, or more, to replace it.

Obscurity was another anguish. She suffered because so few people had seen her pictures, and the hard times that diminished the audiences looked like a personal injury to her in her artistic cradle.

And then she had a stab of another sort. She learned the curse of success. One of her pictures was shown at the California Theater, and she sat in a vast throng and saw with pride that people strange to her were leaning forward with interest and devouring her with their eyes. She saw a fat woman snifle, and thought it a beautiful tribute. She saw a baldheaded man sneak a handkerchief out and, pretending to blow his nose, dash his shameful tears away. And that was beautiful to her, with a wonderful beauty. She played a minor rôle, but she heard people speak of her as the mob went out among the inbound mob crowding to the next showing.

The papers the next day in their criticisms gave her special mention. She loved Florence Lawrence, and Guy Price, Miss Lindsey, Edwin Schallert, Monroe Lathrop—all of those who tossed her a word and put her name in print. A marvelous thing to see one's name in print, and with a bouquet tied to it.

SHE had but a little while to revel in this perfect reward, for in a few days a letter came to her forwarded from the studio.

The writing on the envelope was strange to her. When she opened it, there was no signature; there was a savagery about the very writing. Her heart plunged with terror as she read:

I seen your pictur last nite and it made me sick youre awful innacent and sweet in the pictur and you look like buter wouldnt melt in your mouth but I know beter for Im the guy held you up in Topango cannon wen you was there with that other guy and took your wedin ring off you. I didnt know who you was then and I dont know who he is yet but Ime wise to you and all I got to say is Ive got my ey on you and you beter behave or els quit playin these innasent parts you movie people make me sick youre only a gang of hippocrits, so bewair.

Remember felt odious to herself, with all the revolting nausea of evil revealed. There was remorse enough for a struggling soul that knows its own defeats and backslidings, but it is nothing in comparison to the remorse that follows a published fault.

This letter was more hideous than headlines in a paper. It was more dreadful than such a pilloried public shame as *Hester Prynne's*. It meant that somewhere there was a man in an invisible cloak of namelessness and facelessness who despised her, and jeered at her sublimities of purity. Her highest ambitions were doomed to sneering mockery.

She was thrown back into the dark ages when girls were told that guardian devils floated about them as well as guardian angels—all manner of leering enemies, incubi, succubi, witches, fairies.

She could hear such hellish laughter as *Faust's Gretchen* heard.

She longed to find this man and implore his mercy. But how could she discover him? He was a thief and could only disclose himself by betraying his own crime. Yet he felt himself less wicked than she.

She saw before her a long life of such attacks. She resolved to do two things—lead thenceforth a blameless life, and play thenceforth only such characters as made no pretense of perfection.

She was the more determined to seek a foothold in comedy, in wild farce. Or she would play a woman of sin, a vampire, anything that would free her of the charge of wearing a virtuous mask.

She burned the letter, but she could never forget it. She could not walk along a street or ride in a car without wondering if the last man who cast a glance her way might not be the thief who had robbed her of something irretrievable. When she sat in a moving-picture theater, she wondered if he were not the man at her elbow, and since few men failed to look at her with a trailing glance that caught a little on her beauty as on a hook, she was incessantly thrown into panics.

In time she grew brazen and said she didn't care. A little later she forgot the terror that walked by; but now and then it would return upon her—as often when she was alone as when she was in the range of human eyes.

Chapter Fifty

THE first thing that struck Remember about the business of selling jokes was the melancholic despondency of it. In the other studios there had been a deadly earnestness at times, but usually a cheerful informality. Ned Ling was in a state of nerves and dismal with anxieties.

The first scene rehearsed showed Remember being ardently proposed to by a dapper young juvenile whose grace and beauty were to be the foil for Ned Ling's triumphant ugliness. The juvenile was instructed to do a simple bit of business. Young Mr. McNeal, realizing that the scene was supposed to be mildly funny, tried to play it in a mood of gayety—to "horse" it a little, with a slight extravagance of manner and a humorous twinkle in his eye.

Ned Ling checked him at once.

"Cut out the comedy, Mr. McNeal, if you please! It's all right to be funny in an emotional picture, but comedy is a serious business. A joke is dynamite, and if it's handled carelessly, it will blow up in your hands and take you with it. I want the audience to blow up, not you. So you carry that scene as seriously as you can."

The criticism hurt young Mr. McNeal, but it warned Remember. She went through her own business with a simple matter-of-factness as if it had no humor in it. This was because she did not know how to make it funny. To her amazement, Ned Ling cried out:

"Great! Perfect! Play it straight! The audience wants to laugh at your expense. Don't let 'em know you know



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None but the informed would ever know. Cut glass is more than one third lead. Thus lead plumbing, white-lead paint, and cut glass are in a sense all of one family.

The lead for cut glass (and for other fine glass, such as that for optical use, electric light bulbs, etc.) is first changed into lead oxide by burning it in a furnace. This oxide is known as red-lead. It is a reddish powder.

This powder, mixed with silica (fine white sand) and potash, becomes clear glass when melted in a furnace. At a lower temperature, the molten glass is blown into various shapes.

This is only a minor use of lead in making modern life pleasant and comfortable, yet hundreds of tons of red-lead are used in this way every year.

Lead is also an important factor in the manufacture of rubber, and this means that there is lead in your overshoes, your automobile tires, fountain pen, pipe stem, and in dozens of other familiar articles containing rubber.

Civilization has found almost countless uses for lead, during centuries of experiment and progress, but it would be hard to find any other that is so important as the conversion of pure metallic lead into white-lead—the principal factor in good paint.

People are using paint more intelligently and more liberally today than ever before. They are recognizing the importance of the advice given in the terse maxim, "Save the surface and you save all."

The quality of a paint depends on the quantity of white-lead it contains. Some paint manufacturers use more white-lead, some less, in the paint they make. Most painters know that the most durable paint they can apply to a building is pure white-lead, thinned with pure linseed oil.

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you're funny, or you're gone. But Mr. McNeal, I must ask you not to crab Miss Steddon's scene."

"Crab the scene, sir? What did I do?"

"You moved."

"Don't you want me to move?"

"Never—not when somebody else is getting off a point. You can kill half or all the laugh by distracting attention. An audience can only see one thing at a time—get one idea at a time. You've got to ship 'em your jokes like a train of box-cars. You can't jumble 'em, or there's a wreck."

"When Miss Steddon's at work, you freeze. And Miss Steddon will do the same when it's your turn. And when I'm with you, I'll murder you if you move an eyelid when I'm springing something. And you can murder me if I breathe during anything of yours. And one thing more: Watch out that you don't spoil your own comedy by moving the wrong part of your anatomy. I can kill the best face-play in the world by moving my feet or my hands. I can kill the work of my hands by rolling my eye. Remember that! Comedy is the most solemn business there is."

Remember was amazed, dismayed at the anguish of exactitude attending each little bit of silly wit. She had captured her tears and her dramatic climaxes with a rush; but wit had to be stolen upon, prepared and exploded just so.

Ned Ling at lunch-time told her of a year of meditation spent on one idiotic moment. He had not got it right yet. It might not be ready for this picture or the next. Some day it would come out just right, and then it would appear like an improvisation of the moment.

He was especially delicate about the broad bits. He had a doctor's impatience of prudery, the same contempt for the vicious indecency of what he called the nasty-nice. He jolted Remember horribly, but he shook the furniture of her soul into its proper places.

REMEMBER, like a nurse, like a woman doctor, was far more decent after this course of training than before. That was why, perhaps, she could revel so wonderfully in "The Beggar's Opera" when she saw it with Ned Ling.

It was the first opera she ever did see, grand or comic. Not even a musical comedy had passed her eyes and ears.

Her acquaintance with the world was almost exclusively of the movies, movish. Like the people of all other trades, when the cinemators had a free evening, they spent it in more of the same. The picture-houses were frequented by the picture-people—of whom there were thousands in Los Angeles.

Her first opera was curiously the last opera one might be expected to see at all in her day. Somebody in London had been inspired to revive the sensation of 1728. It had run for a solid year in the new London and another season in New York. Its ancient art had glistened like a Toledo blade. It made the epigrams of Oscar Wilde and Bernard Shaw look old-fashioned.

An opera whose hero was a thief and whose scenes were a prison—the gayest of operas, it dumfounded Remember as it had set old London aghast. There

where the rival Italian companies had made war in an otherwise undisputed field, it suddenly arose and laughed them off the boards—drove Handel into bankruptcy, drove him to such despair that he went to Ireland and casting about for something to do besides the operas that were a closed career for him, tossed off in three weeks "The Messiah!" and became immortal as a religious force.

This much Remember learned before the curtain rose. After it was up, she learned to laugh uproariously at the utmost delicacies of indecency.

She had so lost her orientation by the finish of the seductive villainies, that she did not faint when Ned Ling said:

"I've laughed myself hungry. I haven't ordinarily any appetite. Let's go to my house and have a bite."

"To your house?"

"Yes, it's all right. I'm quite alone there. Just a Jap. Very secluded."

Remember wanted to say: "You tell me not why I should go but why I should not. And I won't."

But it seemed a silly little-girlish, old-maidish, prunes-and-prismish thing to say. Wasn't she an independent woman now—a voter, a free and equal self-supporting citizen of the United States? In her imagination she could hear the wild crew of "The Beggar's Opera" laughing at her for a shy little hypocrite. Lacking the courage to obey her instinct and her training, she said, "All right," and got into Ling's car.

When he said, "Home!" to the driver, she almost swooned, but not quite.

The Jap showed no surprise at the late arrival of his master with a lady. Evidently it was the ordinary thing. Remember longed for a mask or a fire-escape or a gun. She glanced about for weapons of defense.

But Ned Ling said: "Some scrambled eggs and bacon—some wine. —Would you rather have red or white—or a little champagne? Let's have some champagne—yes? Yes, we'll have some champagne—native California—but good."

She felt very much as *Jack* of the Beanstalk felt when he found himself among ogres.

BUT Ling turned out to be a very infantile ogre, if ogre at all. He was more like an art-gallery guide at first. He showed her his treasures. He knew something of art, or so she judged him from his talk, for she knew nothing of it herself; but his manner was impressive. He was especially proud of a portrait just painted of him by one of the California artists. He spoke of him as of the "California School." He had brought home some jades from a voyage to China. He was addicted to jades, of a certain deep dark emerald hue. He hated the sickly pale of the usual jade. Remember decided to take up jade-hunting as a sport when she got rich.

At the table Ling resumed his play with her fingers. She felt only curiosity. She could feel neither alarm nor anger. She was hungry, but he kept one of her hands prisoner and preferred to talk.

Afterward they went into the beautiful living-room, a strange room for a clown, more like what she imagined a million-



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"**W**HY didn't somebody make an athletic union suit like Topkis long ago?"

"Look at the long, wide legs! You can walk all day in Topkis without ever feeling a pinch or a pull. Scarcely touches your body. Big, roomy armholes.

"Fits exactly right—no bagginess; no clumsy belt.

"And listen—Topkis lets your skin breathe. No stuffy feeling.

"Quality? Value? Feel that fabric. Look at the workmanship. Seams firmly stitched; buttons put on to stay. Where could you get underwear anything like

it for a dollar except in Topkis?"

Only the best nainsook and other high-grade fabrics are used in Topkis Athletic Underwear. Pre-shrunk—full size guaranteed. But get your size—38 if your coat is a 38, and so on.

No good dealer will ask more than a dollar for the Topkis Men's Union Suit—although many will tell you it's worth more.

Men's Union Suits, \$1.00.

Men's Shirts and Drawers, 75c per garment. 75c for Boys' Union Suits, Girls' Bloomer Union Suits, and Children's Waist Union Suits.

Ask for TOPKIS Underwear. Look for the Topkis label.

Illustrated booklet tells underwear facts you ought to know. Write for free copy.

TOPKIS BROTHERS COMPANY, Wilmington, Delaware

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At the FOUNTAIN always ask for COOL, REFRESHING



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HIRES has the delicious flavor that can only come from Nature's pure products. Sassafras, teaberry leaves, juniper berries, spikenard, sarsaparilla and a dozen other roots, barks and berries are used to make this cool, refreshing drink.

Say Hires plainly at the fountain and get the genuine.

Hires comes in bottles too—carbonated and ready to drink. There's nothing better for home use. Get it at your grocer's or wherever soft drinks are sold.

For making rootbeer at home always ask for Hires Household Extract. It's easy to make. One 25c package makes 80 glasses. At your dealer's or sent postpaid on receipt of 25c.

THE CHARLES E. HIRES COMPANY
220 S. Twenty-fourth Street Philadelphia

aire's room, judging by the millionaires' rooms she had seen in the movies.

He put a Caruso record on the phonograph, that old wail from "Pagliacci," the heartbreak of the clown who is human in spite of the powder, and feels red blood beneath the grease-paint. Caruso was just recently dead and honored with the funeral of a church dignitary—wild minstrel that he was, singing his way around the world on rubber disks the way the filmers traveled in celluloid spools.

"A few years ago," said Ling, "and a singer's voice died with him. And now Caruso is singing here—everywhere. He'll sing as long as Homer. Poor old blind Homer, who never saw a picture, never knew that his songs would live so long, never dreamed that they would be printed and used as schoolbooks thousands of years after he quit poking about the world singing about the fighters of his day.

"A few years ago, and we actors were condemned to oblivion as soon as we left the board. But we can go on forever now. They're laughing around the world at me this minute. Listen!" He kept an eerie quiet, and she could almost hear what he perked his ears to catch. "That's a gang of sweaty coolies in China. They're helped to forget the opium, laughing at me. Hear that? . . . That's starving people in Russia forgetting their hunger because the seat of my breeches caught on fire. Did you hear that yelp? That was one of the exiled kings guffawing when I got shot in the pants by an angry husband. The king has forgotten his own grief."

THIS cosmic boastfulness did not keep him long in pride. "But I hate my pictures. I'm jealous of them. People don't like me—they just like that thing in the crazy suit. They love him because he's such a fool. I want to be loved because I am me—and not a fool.

"Look at this painting of me. The artist caught the real me. See all the sorrow in the eyes and behind the mouth. See the longing and the unhappiness? That painter got under my skin. He got to me. I love that, because it's me."

And as often happens, seeing that he was so sorry for himself, Remember felt no draught upon her own sympathy. She simply stared and wondered.

He made her sit down on a long couch and snuggled close to her. She was still curious rather than alarmed. He took up her hand again and studied it, talking in the rather literary manner he sometimes assumed: "Each separate finger has its own soul, don't you think? Hands are families. Your own hands—anybody's hands are a group of people. Hands are different; and fingers, they're wicked—capable of such terrible things—holding daggers, gifts—caressing—throttling—playing music—loving—hating. Queer things, fingers! Your right hand and your left hand aren't the least alike, and your face is still a third person."

Before Remember quite realized how solemnly ludicrous a couple of comedians could be,—if anybody had been looking—except God, and perhaps that Jap valet,—Ned Ling's head was on her breast, and his eyes were turned up into

hers, like a baby's. He was in a new-born prattling humor. That was a secret of his success. He was a baby with all a baby's privileges of impropriety, selfishness, hatefulness, adorableness.

He could revert to infancy and take his audience with him, make old men and women laugh at the simple things that had tickled their childish hearts. And withal there was an amazing sophistication. He was a baby that calculated and measured, triumphed and yet wept and wanted always the next toy. He was thinking of Remember as his next toy, and she was thinking of him as her next child.

His warm head and his brown eyes—like maple sugar just as it is liquescent to syrup, and with the same gold flakes glinting—they were quaintly babyish to her in spite of his old talk.

"I want to love and be loved, but not to love too much. I'm afraid of love. It has hurt me too bitterly."

She smiled. He was the more like a prattling baby, the more cynical he grew. His heavy head made her breast ache and yearn for a baby. But he wanted only the froth of life, without the body and the dregs.

"Could you love me just enough and not too much?" he pleaded.

If he had said, "Marry me tomorrow!" he might have had her then. But she had not his opinion of marriage. She had played the game without the name—endured the ecstasy and the penalty without the ceremony. She had escaped public shame by a miracle of lucky lies and accidents. The hunger remained for the rewards of marriage, the honesty of a home, the granite foundations of respectable loyalty.

So when he pleaded with her for love that cheated and played for fun and not for all, for a kiss, for caresses, she shook her head—mystically as he thought, but very sanely and calmly, in truth.

She was far away—mothering a shadowy child, swaying in a rocking-chair throne.

Ned Ling's prayers gained fervor from her aloofness. He called upon a goddess who would not hear. She held his hands and slapped them with a matronly condescension that drove him frantic.

Finally she yawned in the face of his passion and said: "I'll be going home now, please."

He was so thwarted and rejected that he sent her home alone. She was grateful for that.

Chapter Fifty-one

A GAIN when Remember got home her mother was waiting for her. Her father was waiting for her again.

Her mother had fallen asleep with her father's letter in her hand. As Remember slipped in quietly and stared at her, she leaped up in alarm, and cried out in protest with a sleepy reversion to ancient authority: "Remember, are you becoming utterly shameless?"

Remember smiled and shook her head. Something in her calm convinced her mother more than any angry disclaimer could have done. She breathed deeply with relief from the nightmare that rides



A Clog in The Carbureter — A Lonely Road — And a Dark Night

A very little thing can paralyze the mechanics of an engine, and bring annoyance and hardship.

Everyone realizes the necessity of taking care of a machine, and of taking warning when it "knocks."

Yet some people expect the body to take care of itself, though its mechanism is far more delicate and complicated than that of any mechanical device.

Carelessness in selecting food, and neglect of warnings has stalled many a human machine when the trip was far from finished.

Grape-Nuts feeds the body scientifically, and it has a wonderful charm for the appetite. The full richness of wheat and malted barley, together with the vital mineral salts which the blood corpuscles and bone structure must have are in this food; and Grape-Nuts is so processed in the making, that it digests quickly and completely.

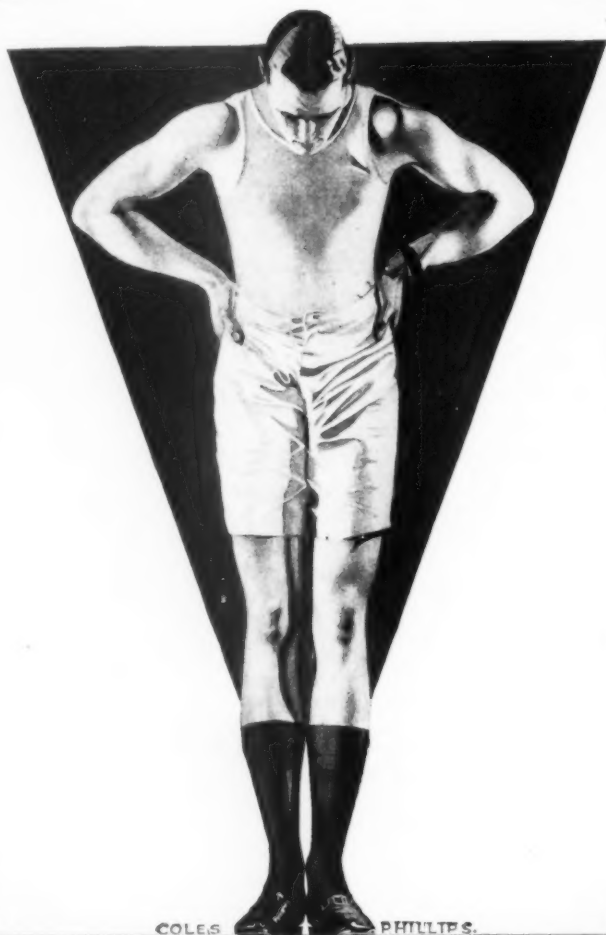
Try Grape-Nuts with cream or good milk for breakfast, or in place of a heavy, starchy meal for lunch. You'll greatly relish the delicious crispness and flavor of this splendid food, and you will be helping yourself to better health—away from the danger of accidents along the road.

Grape-Nuts—the Body-Builder "There's a Reason"

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Good Looking—Long Wearing

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Holeproof Hosiery Company of Canada, Limited, London, Ontario
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mothers' souls night and day. She smiled as she held out another letter from the old child they were both mothering.

My beloved wife:

You will find it hard to believe what I am about to write, for you were never quite convinced that prayers are answered. Well, mine have been, and I am more than ever confirmed in my faith.

My last letter was pretty doleful in spite of the little glimmer of hope I tried to keep alight. This letter would blaze with hallelujahs if I could write as I feel. But to the news:

A miracle has been vouchsafed unto me, even me!

This morning Doctor Bretherick called to see me and stated that he had been intrusted with a mysterious message. A former parishioner of mine, a man whose name he was forbidden to disclose, had embezzled some money years ago and had never been discovered. The still small voice of his conscience, however, was never silenced, and at last it drove him to restitution. But he found that the people whom he had wronged were dead, and there were no heirs to receive the funds.

In his distress at being unable to relieve his soul of its remorse, he bethought himself of his old church, and wrote to Dr. Bretherick, who had been his physician in the old days, asking him to convey the money to me for such use as I found best. Dr. Bretherick placed two hundred and fifty dollars in my hands and assured me that more would come from time to time until the principal and the interest had been paid.

I fell on my knees in thankfulness, and even Dr. Bretherick, hopeless old skeptic that he is, was not free from a moisture about the eyes. When I reproached him with his little faith, he could not deny that there was something in this beyond his ability to explain by any of his materialistic nonsense.

He would not even give a hint as to the anonymous donor, but I have my suspicions as to who the man is. He left town some years ago and has grown rich in New York. My prayers follow him.

I cannot write more! I am too busy renewing the life of this dear old church. The mortgagees have accepted a part payment and agreed to prolong the loan. The members have taken a new lease on faith, and some of the wanderers have been drawn back to the fold. A member on an outlying farm has turned in three fat pigs to sell, and two merchants have indorsed a note which the bank has discounted. The other preachers may be younger, but they cannot point to such a miracle.

As Elijah was fed by the ravens, so some unknown benevolence has rescued this old man of yours from the deeps of helplessness.

If only you could come home now! And if our beloved child could see the light, all would be well. Tell her of my good fortune and say that my cup of joy would overflow indeed if only she might give up her error before the night falleth. I am trying not to ask too much of Heaven, but I am counting on seeing you.

Your loving husband.

Remember never felt more ancient, or more motherly, than when she saw this aged child converted again to Santa Claus. His blind confidence in his wrong-headedness filled her heart with tender amusement.

She was thoroughly happy and fully rewarded for the sacrifice of her savings, but she was too freshly come from the home of the *farceur* to escape a torment of cynicism. She put ice in her mother's

heart when she said: "I saw 'The Beggar's Opera' tonight, Mamma—the wickedest thing I ever did see, too. But if it hadn't been for that, Handel wouldn't have written 'The Messiah.'"

"Hush, in heaven's name!"

"Hush is always good advice, Mamma; but I can't help realizing that if I hadn't—well, sinned is the word—with poor Elwood Farnaby, I'd never have run away from home. If I'd never run away from home, I'd never have come out here; I'd never have earned a cent; I'd never have had a cent to send to poor Daddy—and his church would have gone to smash. So you see—"

"No, I don't!" said Mrs. Steddon. "And you'd better not."

"All right, I won't," said Remember, kissing the frightened face. "But it's a funny world, isn't it, Mamma?"

"Not at all," said Mamma.

Chapter Fifty-two

THE next day Remember dreaded to go to the studio for fear of the comedian who had overnight become a rejected lover.

But he separated shop from life completely and gave no sign of the self-tormentor, the love-puzzle he became of evenings. He was once more the chemist fretting over the minutiae of laughing, weighing the hair's-breadth of an eyebrow, perfecting the mixtures of action to the least scruple.

The child's lonely heart was forgotten, and he was the keen professor in his laboratory. She wondered if other scientists became just such babblers when they went back to their homes and their boarding-houses.

She also became the woman professor storing up information. She began to wonder if the same accuracy would not be of value in the manufacture and sale of tears and sorrows. She began to revert to her old ambition and to feel that the business of laughter-making was not her line.

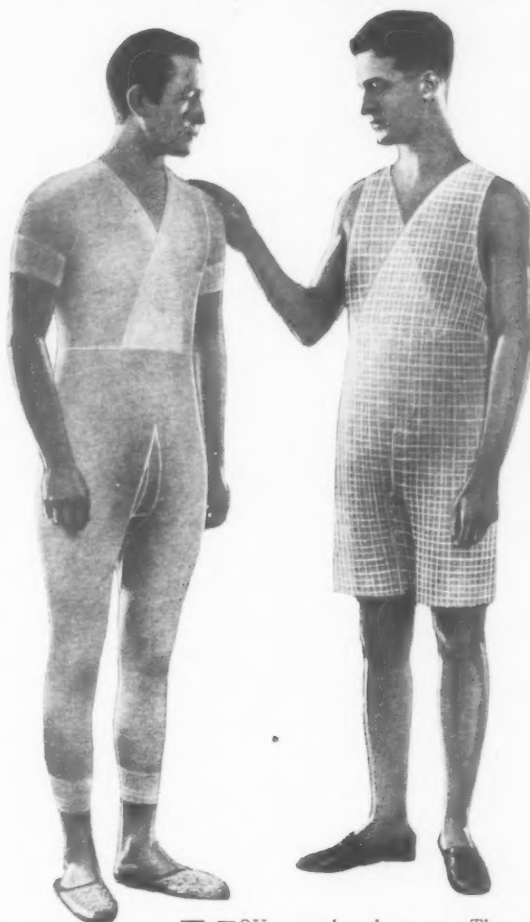
The pathos and the amiable farce of her father's delusion warmed her heart toward the homely sentiments of the everyday people. She wanted to play small-town heroines, and enact village tragedies with a sunlight of laughter woven through them. After all, most people were either in or from small towns. The richest bought themselves farms and dwelt in villages, and she had read that Marie Antoinette had her Petit Trianon, where she dressed as a peasant and fed chickens.

She began to long for a rôle made to order for herself. She had been putting on other people's ready-made ideas, wearing characteristics that came to her complete, adjusting her own body and spirit to a preconceived creation.

Now, like all growing actor-souls, she grew impatient for a mantle cut to her own shoulders, of a tint suited to her own complexion.

One evening when a Thursday-night dance at the Hollywood Hotel drew a throng of movie-makers of all the branches of the industry, she fell in with a Miss Driscoll, who wrote continuities,

BUTTON BUTTON WHO'S GOT THE BUTTON?



See these garments at your favorite dealer's today. He can get them for you, if we have as yet been unable to supply him, or if he is temporarily sold out. It has been a big job to keep dealers stocked up this Spring, but if you have any difficulty in getting just what you want, we will be glad to see that you are supplied, delivery free anywhere in the United States. In ordering, please state sizes and numbers of garments required enclosing remittance to our mill at Albany. Send for free catalog illustrating complete line of Hatchway No-Button Union Suits and Hatch One-Button Union Suits photographed on live models.

Men's Nainsook Suits, \$1, \$1.50, \$2, \$3, \$5. (The \$5 garment is all silk).

Boys' Nainsook Suits, \$1, \$1.25.

Men's Knitted Suits, \$1.50, \$2, \$3, \$3.50.

Boys' Knitted Suits, \$1, \$1.25.

YOU remember the game. The one who had it was "It." Men and boys everywhere this Spring are playing the game a new way. Men are walking into their favorite haberdashers everywhere and saying one word—Hatchway. Boys are saying to their mothers, "That's the suit for me." Nobody wants to be caught with a button. It's a time-losing game.

The HATCHWAY NO-BUTTON UNION SUIT

has not a button, front or back. Step into the legs, slip your arms through the arm holes and you're in. Vice versa and you're out in less time than it takes to tell about it. Comfort that conforms to the lines of your figure. Absolute body freedom and freedom from all annoyance, trouble and inconvenience of lost buttons, torn button-holes and repair bothers.

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They Fight Film—

They who have pretty teeth

Note how many pretty teeth are seen everywhere today. Millions are using a new method of teeth cleaning. They remove the dingy film. The same results will come to you if you make this ten-day test.

Why teeth are cloudy

Your teeth are coated with a viscous film. It clings to teeth, gets between the teeth and stays. Film absorbs stains, then it often forms the basis of thin, dingy coats. Tartar is based on film.

Old brushing methods do not effectively combat it. So most teeth are discolored more or less.

Thus film destroys tooth beauty. It also causes most tooth troubles. It holds food substance which ferments and forms acid. It holds the acid in contact with the teeth to cause decay.

Germs breed by millions in it. They, with tartar, are the chief cause of pyorrhea, now so alarmingly common.

Now a daily remover

Dental science, after long research, has found two ways to combat film. Authorities have proved their efficiency. Now

leading dentists, nearly all the world over, are urging their daily use.

A new-type tooth paste has been created to comply with modern requirements. These two film combatants are embodied in it. The name of that tooth paste is Pepsodent.

Its unique effects

Pepsodent, with every use, attacks the film on teeth.

It also multiplies the starch digestant in the saliva. That to digest the starch deposits which may cling to teeth and form acids.

It multiplies the alkalinity of the saliva. That is Nature's neutralizer for the acids which cause decay.

In these three ways it fights the enemies of teeth as nothing else has done.

One week will show

Watch these effects for a few days. Send the coupon for a 10-Day Tube. Note how clean the teeth feel after using. Mark the absence of the viscous film. See how teeth whiten as the film-coats disappear. Enjoy the refreshing after-effects.

Do this to learn what millions know—the way to whiter, cleaner, safer teeth. Cut out the coupon now.

10-Day Tube Free

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THE PEPSODENT COMPANY,
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Mail 10-day tube of Pepsodent to

ONLY ONE TUBE TO A FAMILY

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The New-Day Dentifrice

Endorsed by modern authorities and now advised by leading dentists almost the world over. Used by careful people of some forty races. All druggists supply the large tubes.

and was one of the leading spirits of the Screen-Writers' Guild. She was also one of the chief officers of the new Writers' Club, which had just bought a house and opened a clubhouse where men and women mingled in disregard of the ancient conventions.

Miss Driscoll thrilled Remember by saying that she ought to have a picture written especially for her. She said she had been watching Remember's work, had been talking about her a lot to Tom Holby. She paid Remember the marvelous compliment of having a personality, an individuality. She wanted to write something "around her."

Four men who begged Remember for a dance were vaguely snubbed. Miss Driscoll's voice was more fascinating with that theme of Herself than even the saxophone with its voice like the call of a goat-legged, shaggy Pan turning dance-floors into leafy forests and putting a nymph or a faun inside each ball-gown or dinner-coat.

Love of a very fleshly and woodland appeal was of an inferior magic to the spell of a voice that said: "Let me write and publish you as your own self to the world."

Remember was beginning to respond to the same self-splitting introspection that she had pitied or scorned in Ned Ling and in other actors who were always worrying over an infidelity to their Selves.

Tom Holby came up and commanded her to dance. When she begged off, he lifted her from her chair and eloped with her like Jupiter carrying off Europa. But her thoughts remained with Miss Driscoll and this wonderful new world where she was to enact her Self. Tom Holby soon realized that he had only an empty shell in his arms, and he flung her back into her chair.

But Miss Driscoll had been carried away by another dancer, and Remember found herself alongside a man whom she recognized as an author of continuities, also one of the chief spirits of the Screen-Writers' Guild and one of the chief officers of the Writers' Club. He introduced himself as Mr. Hobbes, saying that he had been watching her work for some time and that she had a distinct personality, a peculiar photographic genius. "I'd love to write something around you," he said.

Remember chuckled with the infantile pride of discovering that she had toes, ten of them! She also had a Me, and an altar was rising to it. When Miss Driscoll returned, panting and mopping her brow, she said to Mr. Hobbes: "You keep off Miss Steddon; I saw her first." "Nonsense!" said Mr. Hobbes. "I've been dreaming about her for weeks."

Remember felt divinely foolish as the wishbone of such a rivalry. But when Tom Holby drifted back as always, and Ned Ling came up to glorify her with attention, both of them felt that she was cut off from them by some transparent but impassable cloud.

MEM found it a marvelous thing to have geniuses begging for the privilege of writing the words to the music of her beauty, librettos for her limber personality. It was warming to have

strange persons writing in from nowhere and everywhere, imploring her to touch their manuscripts with her life-giving radiance, make them walk and lift their authors out of their hells of oblivion.

She answered such letters as she could by hand and labored to avoid repetitions of phrase. Then she set her mother to work to copying out forms, and finally made her mother sign them with her best imitation of Remember's name.

"And now I'm a forger!" gasped Mrs. Steddon. "What next?"

Here and there was a letter of gracious charm, a cry from some sore-beset soul, a word of rewarding gratitude from one who felt a debt to her art, a glimpse of some wretch with a cancer of ambition gnawing a hapless soul. Young girls, unhappily married and dwelling on farms far-distant from Los Angeles, described the color of their hair and eyes, and the compliments they had had from their neighbors, and begged to be brought to Los Angeles that they might trade their messes of pottage for their birthrights of wealth and renown.

Escaping from the humiliations of obscurity, Mem was coming swiftly up into the humiliations of conspicuousness. The letter from the holdup man was followed by another less terrifying but no less belittling to her pride. She had just been glowing with the first thrill of the first requests for her photograph and for her autograph, paid for in advance by flattery if not postage, when her eager eyes met this,—from Yuma,—written by a landlady who carried her hash-making propensities into her English:

Miss Remember Steddon,
nee Mrs. John Woodville,
Bermond Stuidos, Los Angeles,
Calif.

Dear Madam:

Seeing as I seen your picture at the thearte here last niht and recongized you as the lady who left a trunk here saying she would send for it as soon as she and her husband got themselves located and you never done so and going to the mooving picture the other niht as I say I saw you or so I believ on the scene as Miss Steddon and very pertty you was to I must admit and so how about your trunk is what I am asking and their is storage charges onto it and Mrs Drissett who is still with me and seen the picture with me says to ask you do you remember her asking you about being a Woodville and your saying you was ashamed of your husbands folks or rather that he didnt have no folks at all and she notices as you used another name and hoping to hear from you soon and do what is riht is my motto and I espect other folks to do the sam

Yours respectfully
MRS CLEM SLOAT

Remember's own behavior had been more inelegant than Mrs. Sloat's syntax. Her whole life, indeed, had been ungrammatical to the last degree. She had slunk away from Yuma with all the ignobility of a coyote, and this sudden searchlight restored her to her craven memories. She had crept from dark to dark then, but now she was both the priestess and the prisoner of the light, the victim of her fame, the captive



Posed by Wanda Hawley, a Paramount-Artcraft motion picture star. Miss Hawley is one of many beautiful women "in pictures" who use and endorse Ingram's Milkweed Cream for proper care of the complexion.

Does Spring bring a fresh, healthy glow to your cheeks?

AFTER a winter spent inside, after a season of indoor activities—*what of your complexion?* Do spring sunshine and balmy air restore freshness to a sallow skin?

You can aid nature to bring back a fresh, healthy glow to your cheeks. You can attain new beauty of complexion if you begin at once the daily use of Ingram's Milkweed Cream.

Ingram's Milkweed Cream, you will find, is more than a face cream. It has an exclusive therapeutic property which serves to refresh and nourish the skin cells—to "tone-up," *revitalize*, the sluggish tissues of the skin. Applied regularly Ingram's Milkweed Cream soothes away redness and roughness, heals tiny eruptions. Used on the hands it protects against the coarsening effects of garden work or household tasks.

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the little booklet packed with every jar. It has been prepared by specialists to insure that you get from Ingram's Milkweed Cream the fullest possible benefit.

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Ingram's Rouge—"Just to show a proper glow" use a touch of Ingram's Rouge on the cheeks. A safe preparation for delicately emphasizing the natural color. The coloring matter is not absorbed by the skin. Subtly perfumed. Solid cake. Three perfect shades—Light, Medium and Dark—50 cents.

Ingram's Velveola Souveraine Face Powder—A complexion powder especially distinguished by the fact that it stays on. Furthermore, a powder of unexcelled delicacy of texture and refinement of perfume. Four tints—White, Pink, Flesh, Brunette—50 cents.

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*In five
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without buffing*

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Lightly brushed on each nail, this smart new liquid polish, Glazo, will give you a charming manicure in five brief minutes—its beautiful lustre will not wash off—a single application lasts five days to a week. When it finally becomes dim, you simply cleanse the nails with Glazo Remover and renew your manicure.

So convenient and enduring is this modish polish that it has established a new manicure style.

For cuticle loveliness

To preserve the velvety loveliness of your nail sheaths use Glazo Cuticle Massage on your orange stick to shape the cuticle. Massage it in occasionally and leave it overnight. There is magic in its gentle touch.

Glazo awaits you at any of the better shops—ask for it today.

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You'll find it in an interesting little booklet on the hands and their care. Mailed free. Just send your name and address. The Glazo Company, 29 Blair Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio.

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Glazo Liquid Polish,
with Remover, 50c
Glazo Cuticle Mas-
sage, 50c
Glazo Manicure Set,
75c



rather than the captain of the soul she had for sale, the tremendously advertised soul she had for sale.

She could not decide what answer to make to this letter, and so made none at all. The writer naturally supposed her guilty of indifference and contempt for her feelings, but her silence was actually due to contempt for herself and her inability to devise a decent excuse.

Now and then she sought escape from brooding in spurts of gayety. She went about with Tom Holby and Ned Ling, and with other suitors among the various pleasures of Los Angeles. She danced at the Alexandria to the bewitching fiddler of Max Fischer; and at the Coconut Grove in the Ambassador made part of the mucilaginous eddy of humanity that tried to dance to Art Hickman's uncanny music.

SHE missed no Wednesday night at the Sunset Inn, and on one occasion almost won a dancing prize with a wonderful lounge lizard. Thursday nights found her at the Hollywood Hotel. She was dancing fiercely, but never quite away from her past. At the Turkish Village she drank the thick sweet blue called coffee and chatted with Lucille. She learned to know the Mexican dishes, the carne con chile and the tamales at the Spanish Kitchen. She went through the inevitable phase of looking up odd places to eat, and enjoying poor food because it was quaint.

She joined the horseback rides that set out from the Beverly Hills Hotel and threaded the cañons till they came upon breakfast spread in a glen. She motored to Santa Barbara and heard the nightingale at El Mirasol, or sat on the terraces of the moonlit Samarkand and dreamed herself in Persia. She motored to San Diego, and beyond, testing the rival delights of the Old Spanish Mission at San Juan Capistrano, and the gambling across the Mexican Border in Tia Juana.

She was full of impatiences of every sort. She had fallen out of love with herself. And all the while the longing for a home, a single love, a normal average life, alternated with onsets of cynical defiance for the conventions. She was at her spring, all her senses aleap with youth and desire and a wilding joy in breaking through old rules. The moralities were to her the ice that the April brooks sweep away and the torrents melt—the grim white ice of winter that freezes life and puts love and art and beauty asleep.

She was so horrified by the indecencies of the Puritans and the censors and the critics of her career, that revelry became a duty. The Maypole was a Liberty-pole.

"BOXES OF GOLD"

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Mem's face was her fortune, and her mind was its steward. Her perfection of mien drew people to her as a lamp draws a wayfarer, or a pilgrim, or a moth.

She was in a marriage mood, and her heart and her friends gave her conflicting counsel: Don't marry an actor! Don't marry an author! Don't marry a business-man! Don't marry anybody!

But the "Florodora" time kept tinkling in her heart. She really must wed some one.

Tom Holby came back from a desert "location" browner than ever, less subtle, more undeniable than ever. He fought hard for her in the spirit of the hero he was playing at the time, a man who acted on the theory that the cave-man is woman's ideal, and that she prefers above all things to be caressed with a club.

But these highly advertised tactics were not to Remember's liking, at least at the moment. When he grew too fierce, she struck him in the mouth with a fist that had stout muscles for a driving-bar, and she brought the blood to his nose with a slash of her elbow.

She railed at his awkward confusion, but for some time thereafter she was out when he called.

Chapter Fifty-three

EVENTUALLY Remember met Holby at the golden-wedding anniversary of an old actor who had been on the stage since boyhood, had married a young and pretty actress at twenty-one, and was still married to her after half a century of pilgrimage along the dramatic highways.

There were other old theatrical couples at the feast, and they made wedlock look like a good investment. The occasion was exceedingly benign, and Mem was so gentled that she accepted Tom Holby's apologies and also his company home.

"How wonderful," she said on the palm-gloomed way, "to be loved by one man for fifty years!"

"I could love you for a hundred," Tom groaned. "Let's get married and quit wasting so much time."

Something impelled Remember to think aloud:

"You're determined to play the simple *Septimus* after all, in spite of the censors."

She regretted the mad indiscretion an instant too late. Holby was stalled, and startled her by his quick demand:

"You don't mean that you are about to—that you are going to—to—"

"No," she said, "but—"

Like a child or a dog, the simple Holby occasionally had an instinctive understanding of something unspoken. He astounded Mem by saying:

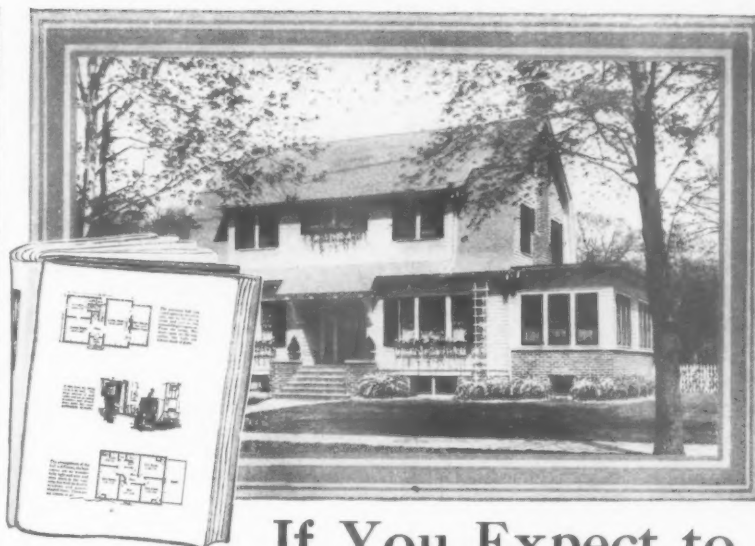
"So that's why you were hiding in Palm Springs, with that phony wedding-ring!"

"Tom!" she cried, aghast at his astounding guess at the truth.

But in spite of what Holby must have imagined, he doggedly persisted:

"Let's get married."

"In spite of—"



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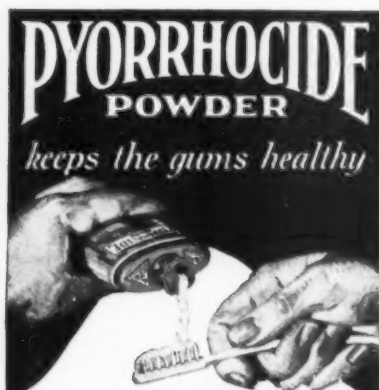
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"In spite of everything!" he stormed. "Tomorrow is the nearest day there is."

She loved him for that impetuous determination of his. He swept her past aside as she had seen him conquer other obstacles—avalanches, thugs, wild animals, terrors that daunted most men.

She offered a weakening resistance: "What chance of happiness could we have?"

"As much as anybody."

She had to make an old-fashioned struggle, but her reasons were modern: "I wouldn't give up my career for all the happiness in the world."

He had evidently been thinking that matter over a long while, for he was positively glib:

"I don't suppose any woman ever gave up her career when she got married."

"How do you mean?"

"Most women have been brought up for a career of housekeeping. A father or mother told them what to do, and scolded them when they did something else. They learned how to make dresses and sew and cook, and that was their business. When they married, they just moved their shop over to their husband's home."

THIS struck Mem as a new way of putting an old story, but she saw one great difference:

"But that wife lived at home, and her husband knew where to find her. In our lives, if we lived them together, the husband would be away from home half the time."

"So is the average husband, with his store and his lodge and his club."

"But then there's the travel, when you're on location—or when I'd be."

"Travel doesn't keep business-men or lecturers or soldiers or sailors from marrying, and half the wives in the world go away for the summer or the winter, or on long visits."

"But you'd be hugging other girls before the camera—and other men would be hugging me."

"As long as it didn't mean anything."

"But it might come to—"

"Well, for the matter of that, a lot of hugging goes on in a lot of homes—and outside of them. No guarantee ever went with marriage that was good for anything, and there's none now. We've got as good a chance as anybody. But here we are arguing. Argument is death to love. Let's love! Let's marry! Let's take a chance! We can't be any worse off than we are now. We'd be happy for a while, anyway."

He took her in his arms, and she did not resist. Neither did she surrender. Her mind was away, and her voice a remote murmur:

"How long could it last?"

"We've just come from a golden wedding, and there were couples there that have had their silver anniversaries. We'd have as good a chance as anybody. We'd be happy for a while, anyway. Let's take a chance!"

Be sure to read
Wallace Irwin's delightful
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But Remember was not in a gambling mood. She withdrew herself gently from his relaxing arms. She wanted to ponder awhile longer.

MARRIAGE was a subject about which the best people told the most lies. If you are truly respectable, you never tell the truth about marriage or religion, and you never permit it to be told in your presence.

Mem cherished the ancient ideal of an innocent bride going shyly into the ward of a husband who will instruct her reverently into awful secrets. She felt that she had somehow lost the right to be a bride, for there were no secrets to tell her. How could she enter a school when she was already postgraduate in its classes? She loved her art. She loved her public. She felt at times immortal yearnings, immortal assurances.

But this love business was driving Mem frantic. In all the pictures she had played, as in the traditions of her girlhood, love was a thing that came once and never came again. Good women knew their true fate-mates at once and never swerved in their devotion.

Yet here she was, passionately interested in several gentlemen, finding each of them fascinating just so far, and faultful thereafter. Instead of giving herself meekly to the bliss of matrimony, she was debating its advisability, practicability and profit. She must be at heart a bad woman—one of those adventureses. Either fiction was very untrue to life, or life very untrue to fiction.

Then came the pause. Hard times struck the movies so hard that in the studios they became no times at all. The Disarmament Convention met in Washington to prepare a naval holiday and guarantee another end to war—war, that is always ending and never ended.

Most of the motion-picture factories disarmed entirely, and the rest of them nearly. The Bermond Studios kept one company at work, but it was not Remember's company.

She was stricken with terror as she confronted her problems. The smiling future was a dead past. The gardenland of Los Angeles had reverted to the desert. All that art talk suddenly became bread-and-butter talk.

What could she do now—not to perfect her fame, but to make a living? She would be poorer than her father. She would have to discontinue the installments of that "conscience fund" which he had learned to expect from Doctor Bretherick. She could not even pay the installments on numerous vanities she had bought for herself from the shops.

Her lovers were as defutured as herself—authors, actors, directors, all. They talked poverty instead of marriage. What way could she find out of all these difficulties?

The next installment of this great novel of today brings Remember Steddon's career to even more interesting episodes. Watch for it in the forthcoming June issue of
THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE



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CONTRABAND

(Continued from page 37)

ideas of the obligation of the public toward its children in the matter of education. I desire to protest against glaring injustice. I desire to accuse a group of men willing to prostitute the schools to the level of political spoils. I wish to protest at being set adrift penniless."

His expression as he uttered the word "penniless" was one of helpless bewilderment which touched Carmel's sympathy. "Penniless?" she said.

"I am no spendthrift," he said severely. "I may say that I am exceedingly economical. But I have invested my savings, and—er—returns have failed to materialize from the investment."

"What investment?"
The young man eyed her a moment as if he felt her to be intruding unwarrantably in his private concerns, but presently determined to reply.

"A certain gold mine, whose location I cannot remember at the moment. It was described as of fabulous wealth, and I was assured the return from my investment of five hundred dollars would lift me above the sordid necessity of working for wages. I regret to say that hitherto there has been no material assurance of the truth of the statements made to me."

"Poor lamb!" said Carmel under her breath.

"I beg your pardon?"
Carmel shook her head. "So you are out of a job—and broke?" she said.

"Broke," he said lugubriously, "is an exceedingly expressive term."

"And what shall you do?"
He looked about him, at his feet, through the door into the shop, under the desk, at the picture on the wall, in a helpless, bewildered way as if he thought his future course of action might be hiding somewhere in the neighborhood.

"I haven't the slightest idea," he said.

Carmel considered. Inexperienced as she was, new to the intrigues of Gibeon, she was able to perceive how the Professor's letter was loaded with dynamite—not for him, but for the paper which published it. Notwithstanding, it was her impulse to print it. Indeed, her mind was firmly made up to print it. Therefore she assumed an attitude of deliberation, as she had schooled herself to do.

"If you will give me the letter," she said, "I will read it and consider the wisdom of making it public."

"I shall be obliged to you," he said, and turned toward the door. Midway he paused. "If," he said, "you chance to hear of a position—as teacher or otherwise—to which I may be adapted, I shall be glad to have you communicate with me."

He moved again toward the door, opened it, paused again and turned full to face Carmel. Then he made a statement sharply detached from the context, and astonishing not so much for the fact it stated, as because of the man who stated it, his possible reasons for making the statement, and the abruptness of the change of subject matter.

"Sheriff Churchill has disappeared," he said. Having made the statement, he

shut the door after him and walked rapidly up the street.

Chapter Three

CARMEL more than half expected Abner Fownes to appear in the office, but he did not appear. Indeed, it was some days before she caught so much as a casual glimpse of him on the street. But she was gathering information about him and about the town of Gibeon and the county of which it was the center. Being young, with enthusiasm and ideals, and a belief in the general virtue of the human race, she was not pleased. She set about studying Gibeon as she would have studied some new language, commencing with elementals, learning a few nouns and verbs and the local rules of the grammar of life. She felt she must know Gibeon as she knew the palm of her hand, if she were to coax the *Free Press* out of the slough into which it had slipped.

But it was not easy to know Gibeon, for Gibeon did not know itself. Like so many of our American villages, it was not introspective—even at election-time. The tariff and the wool-schedule and Wall Street received from it more attention than did keeping its own doorstep clean. It was used to its condition, and viewed it as normal. There were moments of excited interest and hot-blooded talk. Always there was an undercurrent of rumor, but it seemed to Carmel the town felt a certain pride in the iniquity of its politics. A frightful inertia resides in the mass of mankind, and because of this inertia czars and princes and nobilities and Tammanies and bosses and lobbies and pork-barrels and the supreme tyranny of war have existed since men first invented organization. Sometimes it seems the world's supply of energy is cornered by the ill-disposed. Rotten governments and administrations are tolerated by the people because they save the people the trouble of establishing and conducting something better.

In a few days Carmel perceived a great deal that was going on in Gibeon, and understood a little of it; and seeing and understanding as she did, an ambition was born in her, the ambition to wake up Gibeon. This ambition she expressed to Tubal, who listened and waggled his head.

"One time," he said, "I worked fer a reform newspaper—till it went into bankruptcy."

"But look—"

"I been lookin' a sight longer'n you have, Lady." At first he called her "Lady" as a dignified and polite form of greeting. After that it became a sort of title of affection, which spread from Tubal to Gibeon. "I been lookin' and seein', and what I see is that the's jest one thing folks is real int'rested in, and that's earnin' a livin'."

"I don't believe it, Tubal. I believe people want to do right. I believe everybody would rather do right and be good—if they were just shown how."

"Mebby, but you better let somebody else take the pointer and go to the black-board. You got to eat three times a day, Lady, and this here paper's got to step up and feed you. Look at it reasonable. What d'ye git by stirrin' things up? Why, half a dozen real good folks claps their hands, but they don't give up a cent. What d'ye git if you keep your hands off and let things slide? You git the county printin', and consid'able advertisin' and job-work that Abner Fownes kin throw to you. You git allowed to eat. And there you be. Take that letter of the Perfessor's, fer instance—"

"I'm going to print that letter if—if I starve."

"Which is what the Perfessor's doin' right now. And where's Sheriff Churchill? Eh? Tell me that."

"Tubal, what is this about the Sheriff? Has he really disappeared?"

"If you don't b'lieve it, go ask his wife. The courthouse crowd lets on he's run off with a woman, or mebby stole some county funds. They would; but what woman? The' wa'n't no woman. And Churchill wa'n't the stealin' kind."

"What do you think, Tubal?"

"Lady, I don't even dast to think."

"What will be done?"

"Nothin'."

"You mean the sheriff of a county can disappear—and nothing be done about it?"

"He kin in Gibeon. Oh, you keep your eye peeled. Delorme and Fownes'll smooth it over somehow, and the folks kind of likes it—gives 'em suthin to talk about. Sure! When the' haint no other topic, they'll fetch up the Sheriff and argue about what become of him. But nobody'll ever know—for sure."

"I'm going to see Mrs. Churchill," said Carmel with sudden determination. "It's news. It's the biggest news we'll have for a long time."

"H'm! I dunno. Deputy Jenney and Pee wee Bangs, they dropped in here a few days back and give me a tip to lay off the Sheriff. Anyhow, everybody knows he's gone."

CARMEL made no reply. She reached for her hat, put it on at the desirable angle and went out of the door. Tubal stared after her a moment, fired an accurate salvo at a nail-head in the floor, and walked back into the shop with the air of a man proceeding to face a firing-squad.

Carmel walked rapidly up Main Street, past the Busy Big Store and Smith Brothers' grocery and Miss Gammidge's millinery shop, rounding the corner on which was Field and Hopper's bank. She cut diagonally across the Square, past the town pump, and proceeded to the little house next the Rink. The Rink had been erected some twenty-five years before during the roller-skating epidemic, but was now utilized as a manufactory of stepladders and plant-stands and kitchen chairs combined in one article. This handy device was the invention of Pazyzy Hendee, whose avocation was inventing, but whose occupation was constructing models of full-rigged ships. It was in the little house, square, with a mansard roof, that Sheriff Churchill's family resided. Carmel rang the bell.



Free

The Secret of Perfect Cooking



COOKING authorities say that in most cases the secret of perfect cooking is through gradually receding temperatures.

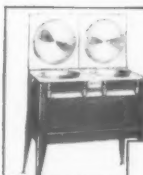
They say, in roasting, the raw meat should first be subjected to high temperature, which browns it, seals the pores and keeps in the rich juices. The temperature should then be reduced, and cooking proceed gradually until done.

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"Come in," called a woman's voice. Carmel hesitated, not knowing this was Gibeon's hospitable custom—that one had but to rap on a door to be invited to enter.

"Come in," said the voice after a pause, and Carmel obeyed.

"Right in the parlor," the voice directed.

Carmel turned through the folding doors to the right, and there, on the hair-cloth sofa, sat a stout, motherly woman in state. She wore her black silk with the air common to Gibeon when it wears its black silk. It was evident Mrs. Churchill had laid aside her household concerns in deference to the event, and according to precedent, awaited the visits of condolence and curiosity which it was the duty as well as the pleasure of her neighbors to pay.

"Find a chair and set," said Mrs. Churchill, scrutinizing Carmel. "You're the young woman that Nupley left the paper to, haint you?"

"Yes," said Carmel, "and I've come to ask about your husband—if the subject isn't too painful."

"Painful! Laws! 'Twouldn't matter how painful 'twas. Folks is entitled to know, haint they—him bein' a public character? Was you thinkin' of havin' a piece in the paper?"

"If you will permit," said Carmel.

In spite of the attitude of state, in spite of something very like pride in being a center of interest and a dispenser of news, Carmel liked Mrs. Churchill. Her face was the face of a woman who had been a faithful helpmeet to her husband, of a woman who would be summoned by neighbors in illness or distress. Motherliness, greatness of heart, were written on those large features; and a fine kindness, clouded by present sorrow, shone in her wise eyes. Carmel had encountered women of like mold. No village in America but is the better, more livable, for the presence and ready helpfulness of this splendid sisterhood.

"Please tell me about it," said Carmel.

"It was like this," said Mrs. Churchill, taking on the air of a narrator of important events. "The Sheriff and me was sittin' on the porch, talkin' as pleasant as could be, and nothin' to give a body warnin'. We was kind of arguin', like, about my oldest's shoes, and the way he runs through a pair in less'n a month. The Sheriff, he was holdin' it was right and proper boys should wear out shoes, and I was sayin' it was a sin and a shame sich poor leather was got off on the public. Well, jest there, the Sheriff he got up and says he was goin' to pump himself a cold drink, and he went into the house, and I could hear the pump squeakin', but no thought of anythin'.

"He didn't come back, and he didn't come back; so I got up, thinkin' to myself: 'What in tunket's he up to now?'" Carmel took note that Mrs. Churchill talked without the aid of punctuation-marks. "I went out to the back door and looked, and the wa'n't hide or hair of him in sight. I hollered, but he didn't answer." Mrs. Churchill closed her eyes, and two great tears oozed between the tightly shut lids and poised on the uplands of her chubby cheeks. "And that's all I

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know," she said in a dull voice. "He haint never come back."

"Have you any idea why he disappeared?"

"I got my ideas. My husband was a man set in his ways—not but what I could manage him when he needed managin'; and a better or more generous provider never drew the breath of life. But he calc'lated to do his duty. I guess he done it too well."

"What do you mean, Mrs. Churchill?"

"The Sheriff was an honest man. When the folks elected him, they chose him because he was honest, and nobody couldn't move him out of a path he set his foot to travel. He was close-mouthed, too, but I seen for weeks past he had suth-in' on his mind that he wouldn't come out with. He says to me once: 'If folks knew what they was livin' right next door to!' He didn't say no more, but that was a lot for him." Suddenly her eyes glinted and her lips compressed. "My husband was done away with," she said, "because he was a good man and a smart man, and I'm prayin' to God to send down vengeance on them that done it."

SHE paused a moment, and her face took on the grimness of righteous anger. "It's reported to me they're settin' afoot rumors that he run off with some baggage—him that couldn't bear me out of sight these dozen year, him that couldn't git up in the mornin' nor go to bed at night without me there to help him! They lie! I know my man and I trust him. He didn't need no woman but me, and I didn't need no man but him. . . . Some says he stole county money. They lie too, and best for them they don't make no sich sayin's in my hearin'!"

"What do you think is at bottom of it all?"

Mrs. Churchill shook her head. "Some day it'll all come out," she said, and her word was an assertion of her faith in the goodness of God. There was a pause, and then woman's heart cried out to woman's heart for sympathy.

"I try to bear up and to endure it like he'd want me to. But it's lonely, awful lonely. Lookin' ahead at the years to come—without him by me! Come night-time, and it seems like I can't bear it."

"But—but he'll come back," said Carmel.

"Back! Child, there haint no back from where my husband's gone."

Somehow this seemed to Carmel a statement of authority. It established the fact. Sheriff Churchill would never return, and his wife knew it. Something had informed her past doubting. It gave Carmel a strange, uncanny sensation, and she sat silent, chilled. Then an emotion moved in her, swelled and lifted itself into her throat. It was something more than mere anger; it was righteous wrath.

"Mrs. Churchill," she said, "if this is true,—the thing you believe,—then there are men here in Gibeon who are not fit to walk the earth! There is a thing here which must be crushed—unearted and crushed."

"If it is God's will."

"It must be God's will. And if I can help—if I can do one single small thing to help—"

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See page 125

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"Mebby," said Mrs. Churchill solemnly, "He has marked you out and set you apart as His instrument."

"I want to think. I want to consider." Carmel got to her feet. "I—oh, this is a wicked, cruel, cruel thing!"

She omitted, in her emotion, any word of parting, and walked from the house, eyes shining, lips compressed grimly. In her ears a phrase repeated itself again and again: "Mebby He has set you apart as His instrument."

ON the Square, Carmel met Professor Evan Bartholomew Pell.

"May I ask," he said brusquely, "what decision you have reached concerning my letter?"

"I am going to print it," she said.

He was about to pass on without amenities of any sort whatsoever, but she arrested him.

"What are *your* plans?" she asked.

"I have none," he said tartly.

"No plans and no money?"

"That is a matter," he said, "which it does not seem to me is of interest to anyone but myself."

She smiled, perceiving how he spoke out of a boyish shame and pride, and perceiving also in his eyes an expression of worry and bewilderment which demanded her sympathy.

"No schools are open at this time of year," she said.

"None. I do not think I shall teach again."

"Why?"

"I don't like school trustees," he said simply, and one understood how he regarded the genus *school trustee* as a separate classification of humanity, having few qualities in common with the general human race. "I—I shall *work*," he said.

"At what? What, beside teaching, are you fitted to do?"

"I—I can dig," he said, looking at her hopefully. "Anybody can dig. Men who dig eat—and have a place to sleep. What more is there?"

"A great deal more. Have you no place to eat or sleep?" she asked suddenly.

"My landlady has set my trunk on the porch, and as for food, I breakfasted on berries this morning. They are not filling," he added.

Carmel considered. In her few short days of ownership she had discovered the magnitude of the task of rehabilitating the *Free Press*. She had seen how she must be business manager, advertising solicitor and editor, and that any of the three positions could well demand all of her time. It would be useless to edit a paper, she comprehended, if there was no business to support it. Contrariwise, it would be impossible to get business for a paper as futile as the *Free Press* was at that moment in its history.

"How," she asked, "would you like to be an editor—a kind of editor?"

"I'd like it," he said. "Then I could say to the public the things I'd like to say to the public. You can't educate them. They don't care. They are sunk in a slough of inertia with a rock of ignorance around their necks. I would like to tell them how thick-headed they are. It would be a satisfaction."

"I'm afraid," said Carmel, "you wouldn't do for an editor."

"Why not, I should like to know?"

"Because," said Carmel, "you don't know very much."

She could see him swell with offended dignity. "Good morning," he said, and turned away without lifting his hat.

"And you have very bad manners," she added.

"Eh? What's that?"

"Yes. And I imagine you are awfully selfish and self-centered. You don't think about anybody but yourself, do you? You—you imagine the universe has its center in Professor Evan Bartholomew Pell, and you look down on everybody who hasn't a lot of degrees to string after his name. You don't like people." She paused and snapped a question at him: "How much did they pay you for being superintendent of schools?"

"Fifteen hundred dollars a year," he said, the answer being surprised out of him.

"Doesn't that take down your conceit?"

"Conceit! Conceit!"

"Yes—a good carpenter earns more than that. The world can't set such a high value on you if it pays a mechanic more than it does you."

"I told you," he said impatiently, "that the world is silly and ignorant."

"It is you who are silly and ignorant."

"You—you have no right to talk to me like this. You—you are forward and— and impertinent. I never met such a young woman."

"It's for the good of your soul," she said, "and because—because I think I'm going to hire you to write editorials and help gather news. Before you start in, you've got to revise your notions of the world—and of yourself. If you don't like people, people won't like you."

EVIDENTLY he had been giving scant attention to her, and plenary consideration to himself. "How much will you pay me?" he asked.

"There you are! I don't know. Whatever I pay you will be more than you are worth."

He was thinking about himself again, and thinking aloud.

"I fancy I should like to be an editor," he said. "The profession is not without dignity and scholarly qualities—"

"Scholarly fiddlesticks!"

Again he paid her no compliment of attention. "Why shouldn't one be selfish? What does it matter? What does anything matter? Here we are in this world, rabbits caught in a trap. We can't escape. We're here, and the only way to get out of the trap is to die. We're here with the trap fastened to our foot waiting to be killed. That's all. So what does anything matter except to get through it somehow. Nobody can do anything. The greatest man who ever lived hasn't done a thing but live and die. Selfish! Of course I'm selfish. Nothing interests me but me. I want to stay in the trap with as little pain and trouble as I can manage. Everything and everybody is futile. . . . Now, you can let me be an editor, or you can go along about your business and leave me alone."

"You have a sweet philosophy," she said cuttingly. "If that is what all your education has given you, the most ignorant scavenger on the city streets is wiser and

better and more valuable to the world than you. I'm ashamed of you."

"Scavenger!" His eyes snapped behind his beetle-glasses, and he frowned upon her terribly. "Now I'm going to be an editor—the silly kind of an editor silly people like. Just to show you I can do it better than they can, I'll write better pieces about Farmer Tubbs' painting his barn red, and better editorials about the potato-crop. I'm a better man than any of them, with a better brain and a better education—and I'll use my superiority to be a better ass than any of them."

"Do you know," she said, "you'll never amount to a row of pins until you really find a desire to be of use to the world? If you try to help the world, sincerely and honestly, the world finds it out, and helps you—and loves you. Don't you want people to like you?"

"No."

"Well, when you can come to me and tell me you do want people to like you, I'll have some hopes of you. Report at the office at one o'clock. You're hired."

She walked away from him rapidly, and he stood peering after her with a lost, bewildered air. "What an extraordinary young woman!" he said to himself.

CARMEL seated herself at her desk to think. Her eyes glanced downward at the fresh blotter she had put in place the day before, and there they paused, for upon its surface lay a grimy piece of paper upon which was printed with a lead pencil:

DON'T MEDDLE WITH SHERIFF CHURCHILL OR HE'LL HAVE COMPANY.

That was all—no signature, nothing but the message and the threat. Carmel bit her lip.

"Tubal!" she called.

"Yes, Lady."

"Who has been in the office—inside the railing?"

"Haint been a soul in this mornin'," he said, "not that I seen."

Carmel crumpled the paper and threw it into the wastebasket. Then she picked up her pen and began to write—the story of the disappearance of Sheriff Churchill. Without doubt she broke the newspaper rule that editorial matter shall not be contained in a news-story, but her anger and determination are offered as some excuse for this. She ended the story with a paragraph which said:

The editor has been warned that she will be sent to join Sheriff Churchill if she meddles with his disappearance. The *Free Press* desires to give notice now that it will meddle until the whole truth is discovered and the criminals brought to justice. If murder has been done, the murderers must be punished.

You will find the following chapters of this delightful novel by the author of "Conflict" and "A Daughter of Discontent" even more interesting. Watch for them in the next, the June, issue.



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THE WINDS OF DEATH

(Continued from page 85)

"Precisely! I have it here—Number Eleven, Jackson Street."

"Mayfair?" I inquired.

"Mayfair," he assented. "The address reminds me, madam," he went on, "that you must be prepared to see your husband—er—not in the best of health. He is, in fact, in a nursing home."

"Is he seriously ill?" I asked.

"I believe not," was the deliberate reply. "You will have an opportunity of judging for yourself within half an hour. I am to ask you to visit him as soon as you can find it convenient."

I sat quite still. I was trying to get these matters into my mind. The lawyer glanced at his watch and immediately struck the bell in front of him.

"You will forgive me, madam," he said, rising to his feet. "I have a meeting of the Law Society to attend. My compliments to your husband. Tell him to let me know if I can be of further service to him."

THE boy was holding open the door. The lawyer, with a courteous old-fashioned bow, evidently considered the interview at an end. I went back to my taxicab, a little bewildered, and drove at once to Jackson Street. A nurse in starched linen frock and flowing cap consulted a little slate and led me to a bedroom in one of the upper stories.

"Mr. Peters is getting on famously, madam," she announced encouragingly. "The doctor hopes to be able to let him out at the end of the week. Please step in. You can stay as long as you like. . . . Your wife is here, Mr. Peters," she went on, ushering me through the doorway.

She closed the door, and I advanced toward the bedside, only to step back with a little exclamation. I thought that there must be some mistake. The man who sat up in bed, watching me, seemed at first sight a stranger. His hair, which had been dark, was now of a sandy gray, and he wore a short, stubbly mustache of the same color. His cheeks had fallen in; his forehead seemed more prominent; there was an unfamiliar scar on the left side of his face.

"Michael!" I exclaimed incredulously.

"Capital!" he replied. "You see no resemblance to Mr. James Stanfield?"

"Not the slightest," I assured him. "The whole thing is wonderful. But what is the matter with you?"

"Nothing," was the impatient rejoinder. "I have had to starve myself to get thin. I took the place and the name of a business acquaintance upon the boat. It was quite a smart piece of work. I am supposed to be suffering from a nervous breakdown. Bosh! I haven't a nerve in my body."

"You left me alone for a long time," I reminded him.

"I was fighting for my life," he answered grimly. "You don't know the inner workings of the game, so I can't explain. I was hemmed in. As soon as I broke away, they were never on to me again. I brought off the coup of my life

in New York, but—things went wrong, Janet. You know what that means."

I watched his face while I listened to him speak. The man was reestablishing his strange ascendancy over me, but for the first time I felt the thrill of fear as he spoke.

"You killed some one?" I whispered.

"I had no intention of doing anything of the sort," he answered. "It was Hartley, the banker, himself. He forced me into a fight at close quarters. We exchanged shots. I was wounded. So was he. He was in miserable health, though, and he never recovered. The shock killed him as much as anything. I got away all right, but it means all or nothing for the future."

"If you have enough," I suggested, "why not try the other end of the world?"

His thin lips curled scornfully.

"I have thought of everywhere," he answered, "of Indo-China, the South Sea Islands, New Guinea, the far South American states. They are all hopeless. The eyes follow. There is safety only under the shadow of the arm."

"What about our meeting?" I asked. "I am known."

"It is a problem to be solved," he said slowly. "There is risk in it; yet the thought of parting with you, Janet, is like a clutching hand laid upon my heart."

It was the first word of the sort he had ever spoken to me, and again for some reason I shivered.

"What is your need of me now?" I demanded.

"To get rid of Norman Greyes," he replied.

There was a silence during which I felt that he was studying my face, and although I do not believe that a muscle twitched or that my eyes lost their steady light, still, I was thankful for the darkened room. We heard the subdued noises of the house, the distant hum of vehicles, every now and then the sharp honk of a motor-horn. In the tops of the trees just outside, some birds were twittering.

"I have figured it all out," he went on. "I am safe here, safe except from that one man. Even as I am now, he would recognize me. The moment I move, and there are big things to be done here, I shall feel him on my trail. It is his life or mine."

"Why do you think that I can do this?" I asked.

His lips curled once more in the faintest of mirthless smiles.

"Because, although he does not know it, Norman Greyes feels your attraction. He is too strong a man to succumb, but he can never resist dallying with it, because it provides him with something new in life. You suggest to him a sensation which he obtains nowhere else. I know men like a book, Janet, and I have seen these things."

"Do you know women too?" I ventured.

"Sufficiently," he answered.

"How do you propose that I should do this?" I asked.

He raised himself a little in the bed.

"Norman Greyes," he said, "is one of those men whom it is hard to kill. A fool walks to his death. Norman Greyes wears the aura of defiance. They have tried during the last few weeks. One of the finest marksmen in England missed him with a rifle at a hundred yards. He is a reckless motorist; yet he drove a car with safety when the steering-wheel collapsed. Nevertheless, if he had stayed in Devonshire, we should have had him. They tell me that he is in London."

"He is within a few yards of this spot," I announced, "and I am dining with him tonight."

For a moment his eyes flashed at me like steel caught in the sunlight.

"I met him at the corner of the street this morning," I explained.

"I ask no questions," was the cold reply. "I shall know if you are ever faithless. . . . A little present for you, Janet."

He brought his hand from under the pillow and handed me an exquisitely chased gold box, a curio of strange shape and with small enamel figures inlaid. I exclaimed with delight. He touched the spring. It was filled with white powder, on the top of which reposed a tiny powder-puff.

"Be careful not to let any of the powder get near your mouth," he enjoined. "A pinch upon the food or in the glass is sufficient. Take it."

I dropped it into the silk bag I was carrying. I was trying to tell myself that I had killed a man before.

"That half-ounce cost me one hundred pounds," he said. "Men scour the world for it. You can handle the powder freely. There is no danger until it gets into the system."

"And then?"


"It makes a helpless invalid of the strongest for at least two years."

Norman Greyes Continues:

I HAVE come to the conclusion that in future I shall do well to avoid Janet Stanfield. As the cold, mechanical assistant of a master of crime, she interested me. I have even devoted a chapter of my forthcoming book to an analysis of her character. I am beginning to realize now, however, that even the hardest and cruelest woman cannot escape from the tendencies of her sex. In all the duels I have previously had with her, she has carried herself with cold and decorous assurance. There has never been a moment when I have seen the light of any real feeling in her eyes. Last night, however, a different woman dined with me. She was more beautiful than I had ever imagined her, by reason of the slight flush that came and went in her cheeks. Her eyes seemed to have increased in size and to flash with a softer brilliance. We sat at a corner table against the wall at Soto's, where the room was, as usual, filled with beautiful women. There was no one who attracted so much attention as my companion. There was no one who deserved it.

"You think I am looking well?" she asked, in reply to some observation of mine.

"Wonderfully," I replied. "Also, if I may be allowed to comment upon it,



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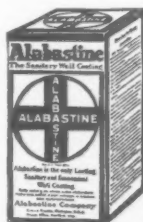
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changed. You look as though you had found some new interest in life."

She laughed a little bitterly.

"Where should I seek it?" she asked.

"Perhaps the change is internal," I suggested. "Perhaps your outlook upon life is changing. Perhaps you have made up your mind to put away the false gods."

"I have traveled too far along one road," she answered hardly.

It was at this stage in our conversation that I made up my mind that it were better for me to see this woman no more. Our eyes met, and she suddenly was not hard at all. I seemed to look into her soul, and there were things there which I could not understand. I was thankful that the dancing began just then. It helped us over a curious gulf of silence. Janet danced with little knowledge of the steps, but with a wonderful sense of rhythm. I was ashamed of the pleasure it gave me to realize, as we moved away to the music, that this woman of steel had a very soft and human body.

Janet was certainly in a strange and nervous state that evening. We danced for some time without resting. Then she suddenly turned back to the table. I had paused for a moment to speak to some acquaintances. When I rejoined her, she was pale, and the hand which was holding her little gold powder-box was shaking.

"Has anything happened?" I asked her, a little concerned. "Are you not feeling well? Perhaps the dancing—"

"I loved it," she interrupted. "I am quite well."

Yet she sat there, tense and speechless. I made up my mind to finish my coffee and go. I had raised the cup to my lips, even, when she suddenly swayed across the table, knocking my arm with her elbow. My coffee was spilled, and the tablecloth was ruined. Janet began to laugh. For a moment she seemed to have a fit of breathlessness. Then, as she watched the cloth being changed, she became herself again. She had the air of one who had met a crisis and conquered it.

"I am so sorry for my clumsiness," she said penitently. "Let us dance again while they rearrange the table."

This time her feet moved less airily to the music. She seemed heavier in my arms.

"Who gave you that beautiful gold powder-box?" I inquired, more for the sake of making conversation than from any actual curiosity.

Something of the old light flashed for a moment in her eyes. Her reply struck me as curious.

"Satan," she acknowledged. "I have made up my mind, however, to send it back."

FALLEN ARCHES

(Continued from page 80)

But it aint necessary to lock you up, far's I can see; I don't aim to make it any more uncomfortable for you than I have to. Until the judge comes, you can just hang around in Joe's charge."

Captain Titus slipped his hand inside his own trousers at the right hip and brought forth his pistol. He opened the nearest drawer in the flat-topped table, laid the gun carefully in it and noiselessly closed the drawer again. Three seconds later he came out through the courthouse door and descended the steps to where McMasters, who had esteemed speech to be futile and hence foolish, leaned against the car awaiting the next move.

"Maw'nin'," the Sheriff smiled. "Cap'n Titus, aint it? Sorry, Cap'n, but would you mind keepin' your hands out from your sides a minute? Deputy Delgado, here, wants to see whether you're packin' a pistol or not."

Bill's arms spread wide, and he smiled as amiably as the Sheriff. "You're welcome as the flowers in May," he remarked. "It happens I haven't got one on. My pistol days are mostly in the discard."

Deputy José Delgado did not let this disclaimer affect the thoroughness of his search. When he stepped back, empty-handed, Blake spoke with an amiability that was belied by the disappointment in his eyes. "That's fine," he said. "Mr. McMasters had one. I've had to put him under arrest."

"I'll bail him," Bill offered. "How much?"

"When the justice of the peace comes," Blake said. "Until then, I reckon he'll have to stay sort o' close to Joe."

"When do you expect the justice?"

Blake shrugged. "He gets here sometimes one time, sometimes another."

"I got to go down there by the river to serve that paper," Delgado remarked mechanically, obviously in line with an agreed program. Blake looked at his watch.

"That's so," he agreed. "I reckon you'll have to go along with him," he told McMasters. "A little inconvenient, maybe, but not as inconvenient as being locked up. Our jail is right hot and uncomfortable, weather like this."

NEITHER Bill nor McMasters wasted breath in protest. The oil superintendent was about to be removed from the vicinity of the courthouse with perfect legality, until after the auction. That some other scheme would be engineered to remove him, also with perfect legality, long before the expiration of the six hours allowed for the sale, Bill had no doubt. It might take the form of a quarrel forced upon him by some henchman of Blake's, and the Sheriff's reluctant decision that both of them must be arrested and put under bonds to keep the peace. Whatever the plan, it would not be worked immediately; time must elapse for Blake to plot it and issue his instructions.

"I came over to bid on some pieces of land you're selling today," Bill said, quite as though the Sheriff had no suspicion of the reason for his visit. "What time was you aimin' to have the sale?"

"Plenty of time. Some other bidders might come along," the Sheriff told him, not less easily. "Stick around, Cap'n."

We'll have it by and by. Just stick around."

The smile on his face was frankly sardonic as he turned and moved toward the steps of the courthouse. He was making no conversational admissions that might be held against him, but there was no reason why he should not let his features express appreciation of the fact that he and the Captain quite understood one another.

"Just stick around," he said again, smiling broadly now, as he came to the foot of the steps. "Ow!"

The little ejaculation of pain came as he planted his foot on the first stair. He ascended with a trifle of clumsiness and was limping a little as he crossed the gallery.

STILL maintaining that judicious silence always so becoming in one who has nothing profitable to say, McMasters departed with the saturnine Delgado on his mythical errand down by the river. Captain Bill, idly rolling and lighting a cigarette, followed them with his eyes until they had passed out of the plaza on the other side. Then he flipped the cigarette away, ascended the courthouse steps noiselessly and stepped quickly into Blake's office. The Sheriff, who was seated at his desk, wheeled in his chair to face him. Captain Bill jerked open the drawer of the table, and Blake's eyes, following the motion, narrowed as they fell upon the pistol, so disposed that it pointed directly at him and now not a foot from Bill's hand. His body tensed, leaning almost imperceptibly in the direction of his own weapon, hanging from the hook not three feet away.

"You couldn't," Bill snapped. "You'd have to jump and turn. Just sit right where you are, please suh, and keep your hands on your knees. Don't go to opening any of the drawers in your desk, or anything like that."

"So that's what you did with it," remarked the Sheriff. "I might have known you wouldn't come over here unarmed. Well, what's the idea?"

"The idea is that you don't make any move to reach for that gun of yours until we've had a little talk. There's two or three things I want that are perfectly legitimate for you to give. The first one is a permit from the Sheriff to carry a pistol in Santa Gertrudis County."

Blake's features were expressionless. "And the second?"

"After that, your promise that McMasters will be turned loose as soon as you can get word to your man Delgado and that neither he nor I will be interfered with from now until we leave Zulema after our day's business is done—and that I get an absolutely square deal to bid at that land-sale as soon as you can pull it off."

The Sheriff sat rigidly silent, his eyes on Captain Bill's face. Then, after a moment, he said abruptly: "I'll call you." As Bill did not at once reply, Blake allowed himself the ghost of a smile.

"You might work it with some young feller that never had much experience," he said, "but not with me. Just because I see a gun pointing in my direction, I



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don't always think it's bound to go off. You and me aint ever happened to meet before, but I know you pretty well by reputation, same as I know you by sight, and you don't let pistols off by accident, or because you've got excited. I aint ever heard of you shooting any unarmed men, either, and I don't guess you're going to begin now."

"I'd kill any man as quick as I would a snake, in self-defense," Bill warned him significantly. "If you should start after that pistol of yours—"

"Maybe I'd get it, and maybe I wouldn't. If I didn't,—if you should happen to be a little quicker,—you don't think any jury in this county would turn you loose on a self-defense story, unsupported, do you?"

"I expect it would be difficult to arrange," Bill admitted. "They might hang me. But that wouldn't be any particular comfort to you, under the circumstances."

Blake nodded slightly in recognition of the force of this argument.

"All right," he said. "We'll take it for granted you might kill me if I went after a gun. Well, suppose I don't go after one? Suppose I sit right here, peaceably, with my hands in my lap, and just do nothing a-tall. That's what, at this minute, I'm aimin' to do. By and by somebody looks in through that door—some deputy sheriff, maybe. Then what? Seeing as there aint the slightest danger of you shooting an unresisting, unarmed man, I don't see why that play don't call your hand right."

"THAT'S fair enough—if it looks that-away to you," Titus agreed, so contentedly that a flicker of wonder at what Bill could be holding back came into the Sheriff's eyes. "That being the way she's played, we might's well be comfortable and talk while we're waiting." He swung himself up to sit on the corner of the table, his hand still resting where it could swiftly dart, upon necessity, into the open drawer beside him.

"Now we're all set—without any violence, or any chance of any—unless you get foolish and try to get that pistol. Here we are, me without a gun on my person—not violating the law a bit—and you sitting there, stuck up, just the same, in your own office."

Blake scowled at the taunt.

"But I aint ever going to tell," Bill went on pleasantly. "At least, I aint ever going to if our business is arranged all peaceful and pleasant."

There was sinister significance in the Sheriff's reply: "You might not get to tell it, anyway."

Bill, smiling, quite ignored the threat.

"Yes sir," he went on, "if we were to come to an understanding, and you saw your way clear to do those little things I was mentioning, I wouldn't even tell Jim McMasters. Wouldn't anybody ever know, unless you told it yourself. You could count on that as a promise. My word is held pretty good—same as I've heard yours is."

"My word is good," Blake replied shortly. "That's one reason why you can't expect to come down here into my town and run it over me about this sale business."

"Meaning you promised some friends? Of course. But what did you promise? Did you promise 'em nobody else would bid—or only that you would do your best to see that nobody else bid? If your promise was that you would do your best, you have. Because I'm going to bid—if I'm living."

HAVING to kill one of the best-known and best-liked citizens in the State as the only alternative to maneuvering a deal that at its worst was a not altogether unprecedented malfeasance in office—this was a contingency that plainly had not been considered in the Sheriff's plans, and his face showed clearly that he did not relish the situation. Bill followed up his advantage quickly:

"That being the case, this thing about whose hand is called sort of alters. I'm going to stay in the game. If your promise was that I can't bid—" He glanced grimly in the direction of the weapon in the drawer and concluded: "I didn't come down here looking for any trouble, but in that case she'll have to be played out to a show-down."

"See here!" protested Blake. "I cain't turn around and work for your interests instead of theirs." And Bill felt certain the Sheriff's agreement with the interests that had bought him was not unqualified.

"I cain't throw them down and give you what they were going to get. I don't double-cross my friends," continued Blake.

"Who in thunder asked you to? I don't want any advantage at the sale. All I want is to bid against 'em, on the level. I know how much the darned land is worth to me; if they want to pay more for it, they can have it."

The Sheriff seemed to waver. "They aint fixin' to be here," he argued, "and I don't know what they'd be willing to pay. This sale—" He hesitated, then seemed to think there was nothing to be lost by indirectly admitting the program. "Whoever is figuring to buy in that land, I expect, is some local bidder, and I don't believe he's prepared to offer no more than a nominal price."

"Who are the principals? Gurley-Lubin outfit?"

"One guess is as good as another," the Sheriff evaded, and Bill knew it was better.

"Chris Gurley is in Derrick City. The telephone wires aint down between here and there, not so far as I could see as we came along. Tell him I'm here, with all kinds of threats to appeal to the Governor, get the Rangers ordered into Zulema and raise merry blazes generally, and that there aint anything you can do to head me off short of homicide—which will be as honest-to-Scripture truth as you ever spoke in your life. Tell him he's got to bid, and let him tell you the price. In a case like that, you understand, I have to have your word that somebody—you or somebody else—puts up the money for 'em in cash or certified check, the same as I'm prepared to, or there's nothing doing. And I have to have your word of honor that the whole thing will be run on the level—and the permit to carry firearms—before you start for the telephone."

The terms, for all the suavity with

which they were stated, were unconditional surrender, and Sheriff Blake had no experience with surrenders. He hesitated; then his jaw set, and if signs went for anything, he had made decision to defy his visitor and leave the outcome, violent or otherwise, on the knees of the gods.

Out of the corner of his eye, through the window, Bill saw a figure approaching across the plaza. He wagged his head slowly, and his eyes twinkled as though at some amusing inner thought.

"That feller, whoever he is, that might look in at the door by and by, like you said," he remarked, "he'd think he wouldn't tell, when you ordered him not to, but nobody could ever make him keep it to himself. It would be too good. Inside o' no time it would be all over the State—all over the border counties, anyway—how Sheriff Alfredo Blake, who is supposed to be right handy at protecting himself and never lets anybody get the drop on him, got stuck up in his own office by an all-out-of-practice ol'-timer that he had just searched for a gun."

The sudden change of expression on the Sheriff's features registered almost comically how distasteful was his mental picture of such publicity. And at that moment he also saw the figure that had come across the plaza, nearing the courthouse entrance.

"Hang that gun of yours on, out of sight; here comes the county clerk!" he exclaimed under his breath. "Give you my word." He turned to his desk and reached for a sheet of official paper and a pen.

He scrawled and handed over the pistol-permit.

"You're the first man that ever got the drop on me since I been sheriff," he growled, "and you'll be the last, if I have to wear the cussed heavy thing to bed."

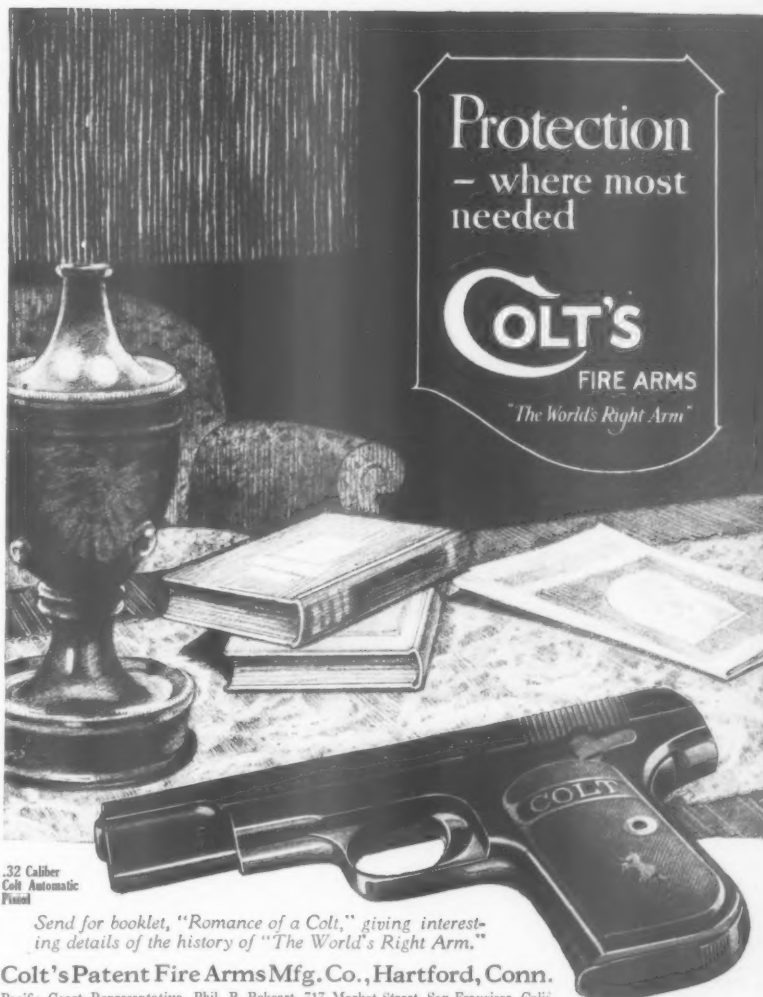
His tone became peevish rather than angry:

"I'd have taken a chance on beating you to it, at that, if I didn't know I couldn't get off to a fair start from sitting down, with these fallen arches of mine. Flat-foot's a hell of a thing to happen to a man that's rid a hawse and kept off his laigs as much as I have!"

"YOU said you got that land you went after, but you didn't tell us how," Doctor Bannister remarked to Captain Bill as Warland was dealing a mid-session hand the next time the Captain was in Summerton. "Wasn't the thing set up the way your man down there thought, or isn't this Alfredo What's-His-Name, the Sheriff, as bad as his reputation?"

"Alfredo was a little hostile at the beginning," Bill admitted, as he pushed in his ante and prepared to scan his cards. "I reckon you might say, as regards whether I ought to have been present at that sale or not, that at first his mind and mine didn't run together a-tall. But later, after he had thought it over some, we got along right comfortable. He shook hands with McMasters and me almost cordial when we came to say farewell."

"What shifted him?" asked Phil Ewing. Bill's answer was classic and cryptic: "He either feared his feet too much—or his deserts were small."



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See page 125

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THE MIRACLE

(Continued from page 42)

Conchita she now have give the cross to me. One more dreenk of wheesky for the great Pancho and his amigos, and then we'll all take a little ride. Ho-ho! I leave you to theenk of what the Yaqui, they have done to those two *Americanos* who have got lost one time. Is it in thy memory, leetle peeg, that the gringo *capitán* find his friends nailed down on the road, eh? Ver' funnee, those Yaqui—they take off the ears, and the feet and the arms, and, *por Dios*, they not put them back the right way. Pancho have the idea better. You, leetle dog, shall see! *Pero*, first I shall have one-two-three dreenk. *Holá*, it is a dry world!"

The key turned in the lock, and the Information Kid was left to his reflections. He had been in many tight places before, but none quite so compressing as this. His head still ached, and there was cold sweat on his limbs, for the San Diego papers had contained a very detailed account of what had happened to Privates Mollwitz and Jackson.

"A thousand to one says I feed the buzzards," he chattered. "I should have put that cross in my shoe. Laugh, damn you!"

FROM the barroom, upstairs and to the left, came the crash of bottles, and deep-throated yells. The Kid tugged at his bonds ineffectually. No man who is but twenty-four and is fortified by neither faith nor opiates can contemplate vivisection and retain his nerve. The Kid was no exception to the rule. In a paroxysm of desperation, he hurled himself, chair and all, to the floor, threshing about like a beheaded chicken, until the chair collapsed, loosening the rope that bound him by the wrists, elbows and ankles. Scrambling to his feet, he leaped for the high barred window in the wall, and was straining impotently at iron rods, when he heard a key turning in the lock of the door. The Kid dropped back, groped for the wrecked chair, found it and poised with the mass of wood held high, and his teeth bared. Softly the door swung in, and the Protector of the Pure set himself.

"*Querido mio*," breathed a small voice. "Beloved, are you there?"

"Little Sister!" whispered the Kid.

In a flash she was at his side; her hands sought eager assurance from his face and breast that he was uninjured.

"*Vamos!*" she breathed. "Up the stairs, dear one—make haste!"

They mounted softly, passing like shadows through the storeroom, until they gained a side door that led into the open. Conchita clutched one arm, and whispered in the Kid's ear:

"In the third stall of the barn, señor, I have saddled *El Primo*. He is from Tia Juana, and has the races run. Also, here is a *pistola*,"—she thrust an ancient revolver into his hand,—and to the saddle I have tied the *paquete*, the bundle I had prepared for thee to take

in the morning. There is food and drink, and some gifts from thy Conchita, so that thou wilt remember. Ay—ay! Go thee—"

The Kid frowned.

"And leave you to that bunch of drunks? Where d'ya get that stuff?"

Conchita beat her hands together in distress. "I can hide, señor, until they are gone. Look you, down in the *arroyo* there is a place known but to me, and the Blessed Lady will protect Conchita, for she is pure. Maria Rico has said it. Go, or I die now of fear!"

Still the Kid swayed irresolutely.

"They swiped your cross off me!"

"No matter, my heart. The charm protects not the evil one. God will strike him dead. Take the *caballo* that is saddled; and oh, beloved, thy lips but once."

The Information Kid drew to his breast the little daughter of Santos Rico. In the turquoise moonlight their lips crushed in the first real kiss that either had ever known. Into their primitive ecstasy floated a *basso profundo* chorus from the barroom, and Conchita broke from the embrace with a sob.

"Fly, señor, for the love of God! I go to hide and pray for thee. The border is but twenty miles. Go now, or they will find thee here."

"I'm off, then," answered the Kid. "By, little sweetheart. You're the ace-queen of the whole damn world!"

He broke into a crouching run across the moonlit corral, gained the barn, and in two minutes emerged, leading a long-legged gray that showed unmistakable strains of Arab blood. Conchita had already vanished across the mesquite toward the edge of the *arroyo*.

THE Kid swung himself into the Mexican saddle with the package strapped behind, and took a wide detour that brought him unnoticed back on the road that spelled safety and Colorado Jones. For two minutes, he bent low in the saddle, urging the gray ahead on the soft grass at the side of the road, where the hoof-beats were muffled. Then something bloomed in the Kid's youthful soul, and his hands yanked at the reins, until the horse came to a jumpy stop. Ahead the road divided, one fork sweeping back in a semicircle to the distant hills. To the left ran the stage route to the international boundary. Back of him lay the lights of Santos Rico's inn, where Pancho Escalante, with the silver crucifix tied around his throat, drank greedily.

Race-track hustler though he was, child of careless philosophy and easy morals, the Information Kid still had something quixotic in his make-up, something which classified him among his kind as a "sport." Conchita's kiss was yet warm on his lips; her voice still caressed his ears; and there was Pancho Escalante's vengeance to be considered!

The Kid lit a cigarette and inhaled

deeply. He was armed and free, and his nerve was back.

"The old dome's gone hollow," he mused. "That greaser will dope out who had the other key. Can you imagine a guy leaving a baby doll like that to face the music? Good night! Let's see, now: they'll tumble to the get-away any minute. Then the fireworks! Little Sister will be lying low. They'll come bustin' along up this road after yours truly. Some of them will think I've took to the hills, maybe, and they'll split. Now, if big Mex' aint with the bunch, I go back and get him—*blooie-blooie!* An' if he rides past here, there'll be one bad *hombre* on his trail. Slap me on the beezer, will you? Gyp me out of my cross, huh? Nail my dogs back on the wrong legs, eh? Sweet breath of a skunk! If I don't ride you over the rail, pal, I'm ready for the glue-works!"

He dismounted, led the gray behind a thick bunch of chaparral, and with quick turns of a lariat around the legs, threw him. For ten minutes he waited patiently. Then lantern-lights flashed to an accompaniment of confused voices.

"There goes the barrier!" the Kid commented. "Now we'll see the Lower California Handicap. About seven furlongs, I'd say. Name the winner, and the world's yours!"

Presently, the Kid caught the drumming of hoofs along the road.

"Into the stretch," he grunted.

There were six horsemen in the party that galloped up to where the road forked. Four of them urged their mounts along the road to Tia Juana. The remaining two turned hillward, and on the *sombrero* of one of these the watcher in the chaparral saw the moonlight play on silver braid, and thus identified him who wore Conchita's little crucifix. The Kid's thin lips tightened to a straight line. He waited until the thud of hoofs against dirt faded to soft stillness. Then he liberated his horse, prodded it upright, and swung into the saddle. Southward the Protector of the Pure turned, riding toward the high hills where stand the sacred ruins of Our Lady of the Candles. But the Kid's thoughts were far from pious.

FOR half an hour the special ambassador of Colorado Jones pushed forward in the saddle, but opposite the gaping 'dobe walls of the deserted mission a horse neighed sharply in the brush of the hillside, and the Kid drew quick rein. A second later he had dismounted, gun in hand. Across the road from a footpath that sabered the mesquite, a dark figure squirmed forward in the dust.

"*Quién vive?*" challenged the Kid. "Drop it!"

The answer came in guttural gasps:

"*Agua! Water, amigo—por amor de Dios, agua!*"

Cautiously the Kid approached. Prone

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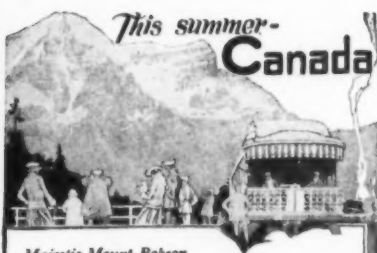
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in the white dust, with a dark trail to mark his agonized progress, lay the companion of the seventh suitor of Conchita Rico.

"Agua, amigo," he gurgled. "I die!"

The Kid struck a match. The man at his feet had been stabbed repeatedly in throat and chest, and death was not far distant. Comprehending the significance of that desperate red trail leading out of the brush, Colorado's commissioner bent low.

"Where you catch him water?" he demanded.

The Mexican stretched one hand toward the mission wall, not twenty feet distant.

"Alli!" he gurgled.

The stars looked down on the Information Kid, whimsical child of the betting ring, dragging the dying *compañero* of Pancho Escalante in the direction indicated. Inside the wall of the mission the Kid dropped his burden and lit another match. The flare startled into action a thousand nocturnal creatures that had made the deserted mission a sanctuary. Bats swooped about the intruder's head; lizards scurried past his feet; a rattler sang sibilant warning. The match burned the Kid's fingers, and he dropped it.

"Agua!" gasped the wretch on the ground, and wriggled for the far corner.

The Kid shuddered.

"Some joint! If there aint spooks in here, I'm nuts. Easy, *hombre*, till I get some light on the subject."

He lit more matches, gathered gingerly an armful of dry brush, and coaxed it into flame. The glare showed a board-covered well in one corner toward which the Mexican was crawling. Striding over, the Kid wrenched off a plank. His match revealed the glint of water six feet below, but if there had ever been a rope it had rotted away.

"You're out of luck, Mex'," muttered the Kid. "I'd have to be a giraffe to grab that stuff."

THE tortured man rolled over on his back, eyes closed, and fingers clutching at his drenched shirt.

"Agua—agua!"

The Kid bethought himself of Conchita's package strapped to his saddle. She had said there was food and drink. He scurried out, and returned to throw more brush on the fire and kneel down to rip open the paper-covered bundle. Then he got the biggest surprise of the whole night. Conchita's farewell package comprised but three dozen wax candles, and one long black-beaded rosary.

"Sufferin' mackerel!" breathed the Kid. "If anybody can supply the answer to this one, he wins the pup with the screw tail."

But the only one who could have explained the riddle was the little padre of San Miguel, whose bundle Conchita had mistaken in the dark for that prepared in behalf of her sweetheart.

The Kid roused himself and approached the groaning figure in the corner.

"That guy Pancho do this?"

"Si señor."

"Which way he go?"

"Agua," moaned the Mexican. "Water—por—amor—Dios!"



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The Kid got up impatiently and went in search of his horse. He located the animal munching peacefully at the roadside.

"I'm only losing time," he told himself. "The greaser's past help, and he had it coming to him. I got an even chance with the other guy now, if I can run him down."

BUT as he put a foot in the stirrup, the Kid experienced the touch of compunction that comes to the hearts of most white men. He thought of the ugly, crawling things that would wait for the Mexican to cease his threshing.

Retracing his steps, lariat in hand, the Kid removed his hat, punched holes in the band, inserted the end of the rope, and weighting it with a rock, lowered the makeshift bucket into the water. A moment later the Mexican was striving noisily to gulp fresh life into his exhausted veins.

The Kid threw a remaining collection of brush on the fire, and looked about for some wood. He saw none, but his eyes fell on the candles.

"Huh," he exclaimed, "why didn't I think of that before?"

In a few minutes the panting figure of Pancho Escalante's lieutenant lay surrounded by a double circle of candles. Small gold tongues of flame flickered in the night air, throwing weird shadows on the broken walls. Once more the Kid knelt, for the other was breathing easier, though his eyes were closed.

"I'm looking for your friend Pancho," he urged. "Where'll I find him? I'm your *amigo*—I give you the water, understand? Now you tell me. I got to fix him so's he don't do no more monkeying around Conchita—get me?"

For the first time the other seemed to appreciate who was aiding him.

"*Comprendo*," he gurgled. "Look you, *amigo*; Pancho do this to me! I tell now, but, *por Dios*, it is too late! He have go back to find the leetle Conchita in her room. *Que diablo!* I say no, *amigo*, for the little one is pure. Then Pancho kill me! Santa Maria—it is too late!"

The Information Kid leaned over wide-eyed.

"Don't lie to me!" he barked. "Nobody passed me on the road! Wait a minute—where does that trail lead? The one you crawled out of? Quick, or I'll kick your head in!"

Wearily the other gave answer. "It is a trail to the *posada*—ver' bad trail—but ver' short. Ah, *Dios*, but I suffer!"

Ice spread through the Kid's veins, and then melted under the furious rush of hot blood. He tumbled headlong toward the road, flung himself on the long-legged gelding and headed down the rough trail, babbling incoherently to the night-wind.

"I'm comin', Little Sister, I'm comin'! Oh, God—why didn't I play my hunch and stick behind! Go on, you long-legged beetle! Lay down to it, damn you! There's no Mexican on your back now. Take that, and that, and that! Now, gimme everything y' got! I'm comin', Little Sister! Oh, I'm comin'!"

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See page 125

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THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE'S School Service Department will help you solve the problem of your child's future training. —See announcement on page 10

An Easy Way to Remove Dandruff

If you want plenty of thick, beautiful glossy, silky hair, do by all means get rid of dandruff, for it will starve your hair and ruin it if you don't.

The best way to get rid of dandruff is to dissolve it. To do this, just apply a little Liquid Arvon at night before retiring; use enough to moisten the scalp, and rub it in gently with the finger tips.

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The R. L. Watkins Co., Cleveland, Ohio.

candles that cast a mellow radiance against the ancient walls. His fingers groped convulsively and tightened upon the black-beaded rosary which the Kid had left by his side. The flames of the fire danced upward, painting the muddy 'dobe in rose and gold. The effect was heightened by the pure moon overhead. The companion of Pancho Escalante relaxed peacefully, the beads on his breast. "Señora Santa," he whispered, "vengo! Holy Lady, I come!"

DOWN the broken moonlit trail plunged the maddened Protector of the Pure, clinging to the back of a gray ghost. There was stake-horse blood in El Primo's long legs and deep chest, and he responded to the reckless desperation of the man who rode him. Man and horse plowed their own path through the brush down to where the trail straightened and led off toward the main road.

A mountain lion whimpered in the cañoncito, and the Kid's heart missed a beat, for the cry seemed but an echo of the dying man's whine:

"Too late, señor, too late!"

Another half-mile, and the long-legged gray burst from the brush, wheeled onto the broader path and straightened out for the final spurt. Almost immediately there came into view another mounted figure, riding desperately from the inn, and looking back. The two horsemen approached at full speed. One had silver braid on his sombrero, and a silver crucifix on his swarthy chest. The other was bareheaded, and for the moment insane.

Pancho Escalante drew gun as he saw the gray horse wheel to block his path. Twice he fired, heard in return the whine of bullets around his own head, and swung off the road to clear the obstruction. But the apparition in front plunged at the same instant; the horses crashed chest to flank, and Pancho Escalante was shocked into oblivion.

IT was the gray gelding that scrambled to its feet, limped painfully in a circle, and then—like the well-trained mount it was—returned to crop the grass by its silent rider and await developments. Presently the Information Kid stirred, rolled over and achieved his feet. He zigzagged twenty paces, and came across Pancho Escalante, his head doubled under his heavy body, and his neck very neatly broken.

Mechanically the Kid bent down, ripped open a cotton shirt and possessed himself of the crucifix. Then he approached the gray. Not until the third attempt, however, did he attain the saddle. Then, reins hanging loose, he permitted the horse to limp homeward.

As he approached the *posada* of Santos Rico, lights flashed from the windows, and a group of figures huddled in the glare of the open door. He heard the shrill exclamations of Maria Rico, and the deep tones of Santos, her grandson. The gray nickered softly, and limped on. There was confusion and the murmur of other voices, but the Kid sensed no note of distress. Some one approached with a lantern, and the Kid called out wearily:

"Don't shoot. I'm an *amigo*!"

"Cielo," replied the voice of Santos.



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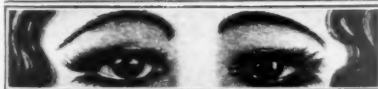
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"It is the young *Americano*. Conchita—he too is safe!"

And in another instant the little waitress of the Rico Inn came flying toward the Kid, crying:

"Oh, beloved, descend quickly. Ay—ay! Come thee down till I assure myself!"

The Kid swayed in the saddle and then caught himself.

"That hound," he croaked, "that hound came back to get you. What happened?"

"*Maravilla!*" cried Conchita eagerly. "It was the miracle, my heart. Look you at the hill! The candle-lights can still be seen even from here, but the greater light has faded. The wicked one was here. Ah, *Dios*—with his hands on my throat, so! To the window I escape, calling upon *Nuestra Señora de las Candelas* to protect the pure. My eyes then saw—and I screamed the truth at Pancho. Heaven! Even the drunken and wicked one could himself behold then that it was as Maria had prophesied. Ah, so glorious were the lights, and the crown of candles! Then who should come from the wall itself but the figure of Our Lady—*distinctly* we saw the figure leave the lights and move to approach! Truly it was a miracle, and we must pray together!"

Slowly the truth dawned on the Information Kid.

"Well, what do you know!" he muttered.

"Ay!" cried Conchita. "Pancho has fled to be overtaken most assuredly by punishment, and Conchita is safe. Oh, please—dismount!"

The Kid grinned.

"What could be fairer?" he observed, and kicked his feet from the stirrups. He swung down, reeled, and recovered. One arm clasped the child; the other hung straight at his side.

Conchita's quick eyes searched the Kid's face.

"Thou art ill, or much tired? Ah, *Dios!* There is blood all over thee! *Querido*, thou art wounded!"

"Nix, nix!" protested the Kid. "I just been vaccinated a little in the shoulder, and it will be all jake tomorrow. But get me a pillow, little sister, and let me sit down; them Mexican saddles are made of cement!"

EARLY in the morning the auto-stage came honking up from Enseñada, and while Ramon, the driver, chatted with Teresa the *lavandera*, whom he aspired to marry, the Information Kid tried to explain to little Conchita Rico that they must wait, for such is the American law and custom, when one is but thirteen.

"The law is wicked," she protested tearfully, "and I love greatly. Conchita will therefore pray to the Blessed Protectress; and every Sunday—look you, beloved—I shall burn the candles at San Miguel so that no harm befall thee until you come again."

Outside, Ramon honked a notification that all was ready.

"*Amor mio*," breathed Conchita, "thy lips!" And again the Kid experienced the thrill that he had known but once before. For one brief moment he was tempted to renounce the land of his birth in behalf of a country where miracles occur. But



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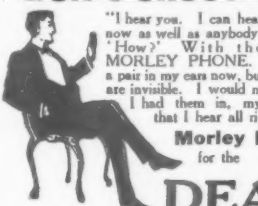
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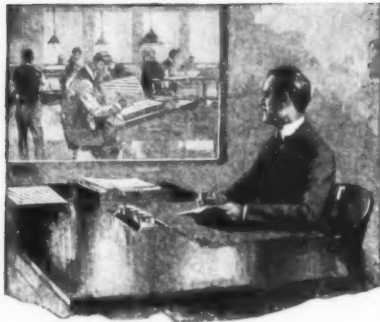
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he was, after all, the Information Kid, and wise beyond his years.

He made his way to the front of the *posada*, horning into the back seat of the stage, where a good-natured fat American drummer sought to assist him.

"Easy, brother," warned the Kid. "Let me sit on this side. I've been working miracles, and I got a bum shoulder."

The stage jolted forward. When it had gone a hundred yards, Colorado Jones' commissioner looked yearningly back, his lips twitching, and one hand fumbling under his shirt to make sure the little silver crucifix was in its place.

"Leave something behind?" inquired the drummer.

"Yea, bo!" quavered the Information Kid. "I'll tell the cock-eyed world I did! And one of these days I'm going back to get it!"

THE MAN SMITH

(Continued from page 57)

rubber-coated men who so quickly and methodically dragged a line of hose into the kitchen. He wondered how these men, big as they were, could stand it in there. Into the restaurant came hurrying Chief Egan, wearing now the white helmet of the battalion chief. After the Chief came a company of men with poles, with hooks on the end. They began to rip down the embossed steel ceiling.

"Clear this restaurant!" ordered Egan. At the same instant, out from the kitchen came straggling several firemen who staggered to chairs in the lunchroom and doubled up. They had "taken smoke" and seemed overcome. But the other firemen went right along pulling down the ceiling. Some man went from one to the other of the men on the chairs and gave them a white liquid out of a bottle. Presently Bill saw them get up and go back into the kitchen.

A policeman discovered Bill and ejected him roughly. "Dishwasher? Get out o' here!" "Aw go on!" pleaded Bill; "let me stay!" "Didn't I tell you once?" rejoined the cop, pushing him forcibly on toward the door. In the street Bill saw a woman, evidently from the tenement upstairs, hugging a baby. A fireman had just brought the child to her. "No ma'am, everyone's out!" he had said.

Another policeman glimpsed Bill and moved him outside the fire-lines. There he stood, bareheaded, still wearing the dirty apron. An hour later they let him back into the lunchroom. But in the meantime revelation had come to him.

Just as one man knows that he wants to be a doctor, and another man an engineer, and another a sailor, so Bill Smith knew now what he was going to be: a fireman, and a man!

But could he? He learned that there were civil-service rules and an examination. He was told by persons he asked that he was probably under weight. However, his earlier training taught him in this case what to do. As a citizen who had just attained his majority the local political club valued his vote, sufficiently to point out the lines he should follow to pass the civil-service examination, and to



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get the appointment. His night-school work stood him in good stead. He got in just under the line in the physical examination.

And so we catch up to Bill Smith, probationary fireman, on trial for a certain period of time, now supposed to be sleeping in the dormitory of Two Engine. But between the time he had gone to bed, and the present moment, a period of time in which he had passed his life in mental review, conviction had come to him on two points:

First, in spite of always putting up the best fight he could, he'd always been licked! Second, was it in him to stand this ordeal of fire that lay before him? He had seen the strongest men stagger back, there in that lunchroom, when the fire, burning in the sawdust of the huge icebox, had emitted deadly gases and fumes.

A revulsion of feeling came over him. He felt himself slump. He had deliberately placed himself where he must know whether or not he was a man. He closed his eyes. Well, he'd take what was coming to him—just as always!

CLANG—clang—clang—

For an instant Bill Smith didn't move. His eyes had come open at the sound of the bell on the wall. The room was instantaneously galvanized into action. Forms rushed by him in the darkness. Then he realized that he'd miss the bell! He fumbled into trousers and rubber boots. He heard the heavy motor of the engine below start with a churning roar. The company was going out!

He shot down the pole, and made a leap for the rear of the hose wagon. Big Whalen caught him under the arm. Bill fumbled with his helmet and his rubber coat, as the wagon rocked madly down the street. The rain dashed against his face. Whalen pulled the sleeve of Bill's coat around and held him under the arm while Bill buttoned it. The wagon swerved round a corner. Bill almost pitched off, but Whalen's arm was still under his own. The street ahead showed the red reflection of a fire in a tenement doorway.

As the men sprang from the wagon, Whalen gave Bill a hearty blow on the back. "Follow the Captain, whatever he says!" he shouted in Bill's ear.

While several firemen were speedily yet systematically hauling the black lengths of hose from the body of the wagon, Bill stood by the high-pressure hydrant, where hose was being coupled on. The man at the hydrant looked up at Bill. "Get busy—we're first due at this box! Looks like a good one to me!"

Bill Smith looked at the towering tenement opposite. The fire roared and seethed in the hallway. The tenants must be upstairs still—most of them, anyway. The fire must have gone like a flash. He'd lived in tenement houses and knew. Rotten wood, dry wooden walls, and stairways that went up and up, furnishing a veritable flue to a fire if it got a good start.

He eyed the windows above the first floor. Not much smoke showing yet. Few people at the windows. If they weren't at the windows now, then they

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192-RA

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must be either at the windows in the rear, or the smoke had them already. Captain Winters saw Smith. "Here, get busy on this line! Get busy!" he ordered.

Bill Smith laid hold of the hose, with the other firemen. He found himself behind the broad back of Whalen. "Start your water, Two Engine!" he heard Captain Winters call. Bill was facing the heat that rolled back from the entrance door. He heard the clanging of bells, the wailing of sirens, and sensed the rush of black-coated firemen.

Smash!

The high-pressure stream hit the stairs of the hallway, the sides of the walls, the top of the door. The vivid lurid light of the fire died down almost at once, and smoke billowed out. Bill's eyes were blinded, and he gasped. The hose was moving forward. He must not let go! But it meant going into the very center of that furnace!

Bill found himself stumbling ahead, unable to see, his eyes smarting and running with tears. He felt under his feet the several steps up to the entrance of the hallway. "Down!" he heard a voice call, muffled, in front of him. He saw the back of big Whalen disappear in the swirling smoke. Some one behind him pulled heavily at his rubber coat. He understood from that that he was to get down on his hands and knees.

UP ahead in the long, narrow hallway, Captain Winters was lying flat on the floor, with Carpenter, the oldest man in the company, at his side. Together they worked the pipe from side to side of the hallway, hitting persistently under the fire that roared behind the smoke that rose in a copper-colored wall before them. Two Engine had the inside stairway. Captain Winters knew as well as if he were at this moment in the street, what disposition of the companies was being made by Chief Egan, whose car had left the firehouse only a few seconds behind Two Engine.

Twelve Engine was taking the cellar-way in front; Forty-two Engine was at the back of the tenement, on Water Street, stretching a line through the buildings facing on that street. Seven Truck was opening up windows from ladders raised in front of the building, and going through the windows to search for anyone who might have been overcome by smoke. Twenty-six Truck was already going through the adjoining building to the rear yard, where they would ascend fire-escapes and search the rear apartments. Sixteen Engine had gone to the roof, through an adjoining tenement, and was ventilating, and meeting the fire from above.

Captain Winters knew, from years of fire-fighting under conditions like this tonight, that his company, Two Engine, would be the key company until the second-alarm companies should arrive. He knew that on the one line of hose, stretched in this hallway, depended literally the lives of scores of men and women, boys and girls in the big tenement above. Two Engine must hold that fire from mounting and mushrooming out into the upper hallways! A blazing furnace in the lower hallway, it was prob-

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ably still mainly dense clouds of smoke in the halls above.

Through the murky billows came Chief Egan into the hallway. He stumbled past Bill Smith, now prone upon the floor. Bill heard the Chief call: "Tom!" and his captain's answer: "Here, Chief!"

"Tom," shouted the Chief, "hold that fire away from those stairs, and we can get 'em down yet!"

"All right, Chief!"

Bill Smith, edging along on his stomach as he felt the hose pulled slowly forward, began to grow dizzy. He panted for breath. Was there no fresh air left in the world? No one spoke to him. No one was even near him. He heard the roaring of water in front of him, but the smoke kept coming just as hard. The atmosphere grew fearfully hot. Even the floor under him was hot, from the fire in the cellar.

Smoke!

He'd never thought it could be like this! He clutched the hose with his hands, clung to it as though some one might seek to pull him backward into the street.

He felt two men crawl past him, going out. He couldn't see them, his eyes smarted so, and it was so dark. What was the matter? He heard a hoarse voice behind him shout: "Move up there!" Then he understood. Two men all in—getting out, by orders of the boss, before they were completely done! Just as he'd seen the men stumble out of the kitchen, at the lunchroom fire.

But was Captain Winters still up there? Bill's head was going round and round. Yes, he must still be up there! He'd said he wouldn't send anyone in where he wouldn't go himself and stay! All right!

Bill heard other men in the hallway strangling and gasping from the blasts of heat and smoke that they had breathed, there on the pipe. Again a tug at the hose—forward!

He heard Captain Winters call: "Another man, here on the pipe!" Then a pause. . . .

Again the hoarse voice of the Captain: "Here! Whalen's done for! Get here, some one! Get hold of this pipe with me!"

A man crawled past Bill on his hands and knees and fell prone beside him. Silence. Bill's head was whirling.

Again that call from up ahead:

"A man on this pipe with me!"

Captain Winters' voice, muffled, weak!

BILL SMITH, on probation, crawled gropingly forward along the hose, not thinking, not reasoning, just going blindly to the man who'd called him "son" that very evening. Crawled ahead into hell!

Flat on the floor, in water, and the remnants of burned wood, lay the Captain, still directing the torrent from the hose into the crackling, seething, coppery blackness. The heat tore at Bill's face. The hose-pipe tugged and jumped like an unruly animal, with the tremendous pressure behind it.

"Who are you?" The Captain had seen a form half clutch, half fall upon the hose.

"Smith." The voice sounded to Bill as if a long way off—not his voice at all, more like a squeak.

"Smith—the new man? Here, man, give a hand! The rest are all in!"

Man!

He lay down then beside his captain. No words. Nothing but hellish suffering, blasts of fiery heat—belchings of suffocating, strangling smoke.

Man!

Bill knew he wouldn't be able to hold out more than a few minutes longer, but his captain wasn't ordering him out, and a captain knew how much a man ought to be able to take!

So he lay like a log. Feebly he tried to help the Captain swing the pipe back and forth.

And then voices behind them! Through the smoke came other men, another line of hose! Smash into the smoke went the new deluge. Men caught up the pipe of Two Engine, held it with the captain of that company.

"Here's Six Engine, Cap! Second-alarm company!"

Captain Winters struggled slowly to his feet. Chief Egan came into the hallway and focused his big flash-lamp on Winters and then on the form lying prostrate by his side.

A fireman of Six Engine lifted Bill Smith in his powerful arms, and Bill's helmet fell from his head.

"Who is it?" the Chief asked Winters.

"New one, Chief—named Smith—assigned to Two Engine yesterday—and by God, he's a man!"

"Man—" mumbled Bill Smith.

MAMSELLE CHÉRIE

(Continued from page 76)

can't buy happiness that way. And it would have been worse for you, living with a man you couldn't love—"

He seemed to feel by the touch of Cherry's hand how happy he was making her.

"Sometimes I've wished to God I'd never left Leiperville. We were happy there, Cherry, and we didn't have any too much money. But she didn't understand—your mother didn't. And she never could have been contented back there again with the cast-iron deer on the lawn."

He laughed quietly to himself. "You

remember those deer, Cherry? Always standing waiting, listening, watching, when I came up from the station. I liked 'em. They were home. I wonder if they're still there."

Cherry had never known that things like that could mean so much to him. She murmured something, and he went on in a moment: "I'm counting on you, Cherry. I've always felt that I could count on you in a pinch. The pinch has come. Even the house at Leiperville will be sold. We're completely ruined. There's nothing at all, of course, but the furniture and your mother's jewels."

He made the statement passively, almost with the air of one who remarks upon the misfortune of another. It seemed to Cherry that if he was without passion, he was also without regret, as though his air of abstraction was a part of his illness in which the world had forgotten him and he the world.

"Of course, my dear," he went on calmly, "we will have to change our whole mode of life."

"Yes, Daddy. I've planned that." And she told him of David Sangree's offer of the house on One Hundred and Fifty-second Street.

He listened soberly, nodding his head in approval.

"That is good," he said, repeating the word. "Good, very good." And then with another glance at the door: "And your mother?"

Cherry moved her shoulders helplessly. "She still hopes for something out of the wreck. So does Jack. But they'll agree. They must."

He nodded his head sagely.

"Yes, they will agree," he repeated. "They must."

Cherry glanced at him in disquietude. His tone was so unlike the one that she had known—so gentle, so colorless. For a moment the thought came to her that his mind might have been enfeebled by his illness, but the look in his eyes reassured her.

Responding to his questions, Cherry began telling him what she planned to do—the sale of the furniture, even her mother's pearls, if necessary. He nodded slowly but definitely. Yes, even that, he agreed. When she had finished, he was silent for a long while, looking out of the window, and Cherry thought that she had talked too much.

But as she moved in her chair, he spoke again, very quietly.

"Will you please tell your mother to come to me here, Cherry dear?" he asked.

She started up, dismayed. "Do you think you'd better, Daddy?"

"Yes, my dear—if you please," he said firmly, "and at once."

He was still looking out of the window. She felt that his words were a command such as he had never issued before. And as she still hesitated, his voice was more calm but more insistent.

"You will do what I ask, Cherry—if you please."

What happened in that room after her mother had entered it, no one but husband and wife were to know. Alicia Mohun, pale, but dry-eyed, came out and moved like a sleepwalker down the corridor to her room, where she remained alone for the remainder of the day. Later Cherry stole silently into her father's room. He was still in his chair by the window. He was quite motionless, and his eyes were closed, and so, for fear of disturbing him, she went out and up to her own room, wondering at the miracle that had been accomplished so quietly.

THOUGH David Sangree had placed himself at Cherry's disposal for any task that she did not care to accomplish herself, she did not call upon him. Perhaps she took pride in being able to attend to the details of reorganization herself—

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Photoplay producers ready to pay big sums for stories but can't get them. One big corporation offers a novel test which is open to anyone without charge. Send for the Van Loan Questionnaire and test yourself in your own home.

A SHORT time ago a Montana housewife received a handsome check for a motion picture scenario. Six months before she had never had the remotest idea of writing for the screen. She did not seek the opportunity. It was thrust on her. She was literally hunted out by a photoplay corporation which is combing the country for men and women with story-telling ability.

This single incident gives some idea of the desperate situation of the motion picture companies. With millions of capital to work with, with magnificent mechanical equipment, the industry is in danger of complete paralysis because the public demands better stories—and the number of people who can write those stories are only a handful. It is no longer a case of inviting new writers; the motion picture industry is literally reaching out in every direction. It offers to every intelligent man and woman—to you—the home test which revealed unsuspected talent in this Montana housewife. And it has a fortune to give you if you succeed.

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PALMER PHOTOPLAY Corporation, Department of Education,
124 West 4th St., Los Angeles, Cal.



PLEASE send me, without cost or obligation on my part, your questionnaire. I will answer the questions in it and return it to you for analysis. If I pass the test, I am to receive further information about your Course and Service.

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or perhaps she did not wish to intrude upon his busy hours unnecessarily. He had a feeling that when she really needed him, she would let him know. But just the same, he couldn't conceal an anxiety on her behalf. He had never been able to forget that in spite of her air of self-sufficiency, she had not been trained to responsibility such as this.

When he met her at the house on One Hundred and Fifty-second Street to make the final arrangements before the Mohun family moved in, she seemed to be in a state of nervous compression, intensely alert mentally, with a cheerfulness which was a little too determined to be quite natural. He thought her thinner, her motions more abrupt, her short laugh more frequent, her comments more frankly ironical.

After she had gone over the house, making suggestions as to changes of furniture to suit the needs of the family, she dropped wearily into a chair in the room which had been selected for her father, and took out her cigarette-case. A moment for confidences had come.

"I want to talk to you, Rameses," she said. "I haven't had a chance before. It seems as though I have been driven from one unpleasant duty to another, with no time to think for myself."

"It has been a terrible responsibility," said Sangree with feeling. "I've thought of you often."

"I'm glad you have," she said. "You know,"—and she laughed,—"I've felt as though some devil were chasing me—that I'd have to keep going, to prevent him from catching up. I must keep going; I need chains on my wheel—that's certain."

Sangree frowned. "You need a rest," he said severely.

"No," she went on quickly, "I don't think I want a rest. I'll do something damned silly if I sit down and think. I think I've had a little too much—all at once; that's all. It's gotten me twisted somehow. I can't quite find the reason for it. The whole thing is like a death in the family without any funeral to go to. I could understand that. You could grieve, go in mourning, and have it over with; but there isn't any end to trouble of this kind. It just goes on and on, without any end in sight. I've had bitter moments, unhappy ones, but none of them so bad as the indifferent ones, when I don't care what happens."

"That's rubbish," he broke in.

"Thanks. I know it. And I wanted you to tell me so. It's comforting, somehow. You see, Rameses," she finished with a grin, "it's you who have been the chains on my wheel."

"Oh, have I?"

"Yes. But I need an emergency-brake, or something. I'm in a funny mood. I guess I've always had my own way too much. I never had to think about anybody but myself. This thinking for

others isn't my line at all. It was a kind of adventure, at first. I liked them all relying on me. I liked making the beds—at first. It was a sort of game, being useful—a sort of a novelty. But I don't mind telling you that I'm rather tired of it all."

SHE took a few puffs of her cigarette, but Sangree didn't reply, though he was watching her keenly.

"Why shouldn't I tell the truth—to you? I miss the machines, my runabout especially. I miss the crowd, too. They used to come running after me—Gloria, Vi, Sylvia, Phoebe—phoning every day. Now nobody does—except Genie. I've been busy when they called. God knows I can't blame them! I haven't been much fun when I have seen them. I don't suppose they see any reason why they should get down on *their* luck just because I am. I wouldn't either, if I were they. The boys have been all right—but somehow I haven't felt much like seeing the boys. And nobody likes to be hearing hard-luck stories all the time. And so, of course, things are going on with them in the same old way—parties, jazz, joy-rides. It hurts me a little that they can jog on without me—don't you see?"

"But you could go out now, if you wanted to. Why don't you? It would do you good."

"No. Things are changed somehow. Don't you suppose I feel it?" she broke in quickly. "To go with that crowd, you've got to go with them all the time. And besides, the invitations for the real things have stopped coming—even to Mother. She feels the slight horribly. She would, you know. It's just as though we were all already dead and buried. And I guess we are, so far as ever going about again is concerned. Oh, I don't care about the invitations. It's the neglect of one's friends that hurts the most—and then the careless nods of acquaintances." She laughed bitterly. "H-m! Yesterday I passed the little Carruthers snip on the street—you know, the profiteer Carrutherses; and she cut me. Imagine it!"

"Is her acquaintance valuable to you?"

"No. But I've always been nice to her," she said rather pathetically.

She got up, went to the window and looked out. The prospect was not unpleasing, but it was not like Seventy-eighth Street. To his surprise she turned suddenly and faced him.

"Rameses," she said quickly, "do you think that anyone I know could have recognized me coming out of your rooms that night?"

He took a pace toward her.

"Cherry! You don't mean that you think somebody—"

"I don't know. I'm just asking you. There's an undercurrent I can't explain. Perhaps it's just an instinct. But a bit

of gossip like that travels like the wind." "Oh, I can't believe that. Has anyone spoken of it?"

"No, no one would—except Genie perhaps. I'd be the last person in the world to hear—except you. It would be funny, Rameses, wouldn't it, if people tagged a thing like that—on *us*!" She laughed constrainedly.

"Cherry! Enough of this!" He had taken a stride and caught her by the wrist. "You're morbid. You're letting your imagination play hob with your reason. You can't go on bucking the world in this mood, or you'll end in a smash-up."

She released herself and turned away.

"Yes. That's just it," she muttered. "I'd like to give them something real to talk about."

He stared at her careless back for a moment and then turned away toward the mantel. Perhaps she had expected to taunt him into a reply, but his silence had a deeper meaning than any verbal protest, and in a moment she turned.

"Now, I've disappointed you," she said. And as he still made no reply: "I suppose I have. But I can't help it. That's the way I feel. I'm sick of being good—sick of it. I'd like to go on the loose—and I will, if I find out that people are trying to drag me down for something I didn't do."

"You're talking like a fool," he answered. "Nobody is trying to drag you down. You're dreaming. Nobody could know—nobody could possibly know."

"Perhaps," she said with a shrug. "I don't care."

"You do care," he growled savagely. "You do care."

"No, I don't—I turned my back on public opinion when it didn't matter. I can still turn it, now that it does."

"And your pride?" he asked distinctly.

BUT she only threw her cigarette into the fire and laughed. The thread of communion was broken. It seemed as though she meant to hurt him, or at the least was indifferent to his hurts. It was not so much what she said, as what she neglected to say. For the first time that he could remember, he and Cherry were not attune.

"Come," she said at last in a matter-of-fact tone. "We must be going."

She led the way down into the small hallway, where David Sangree went before her to open the door. His face was set in stern lines, but he said nothing more.

Suddenly she thrust out a hand to him. "I'm a little beast, Rameses. Tell me that I am!"

"No," he said, touching her fingers lightly and releasing them.

"You'll try to think well of me?"

"I've never thought anything else," he finished gravely as he opened the door. And in a moment they were in the street.

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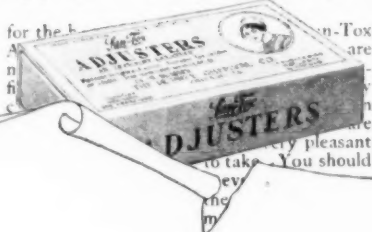
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